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*"A book, through whose windows one looks out upon the  
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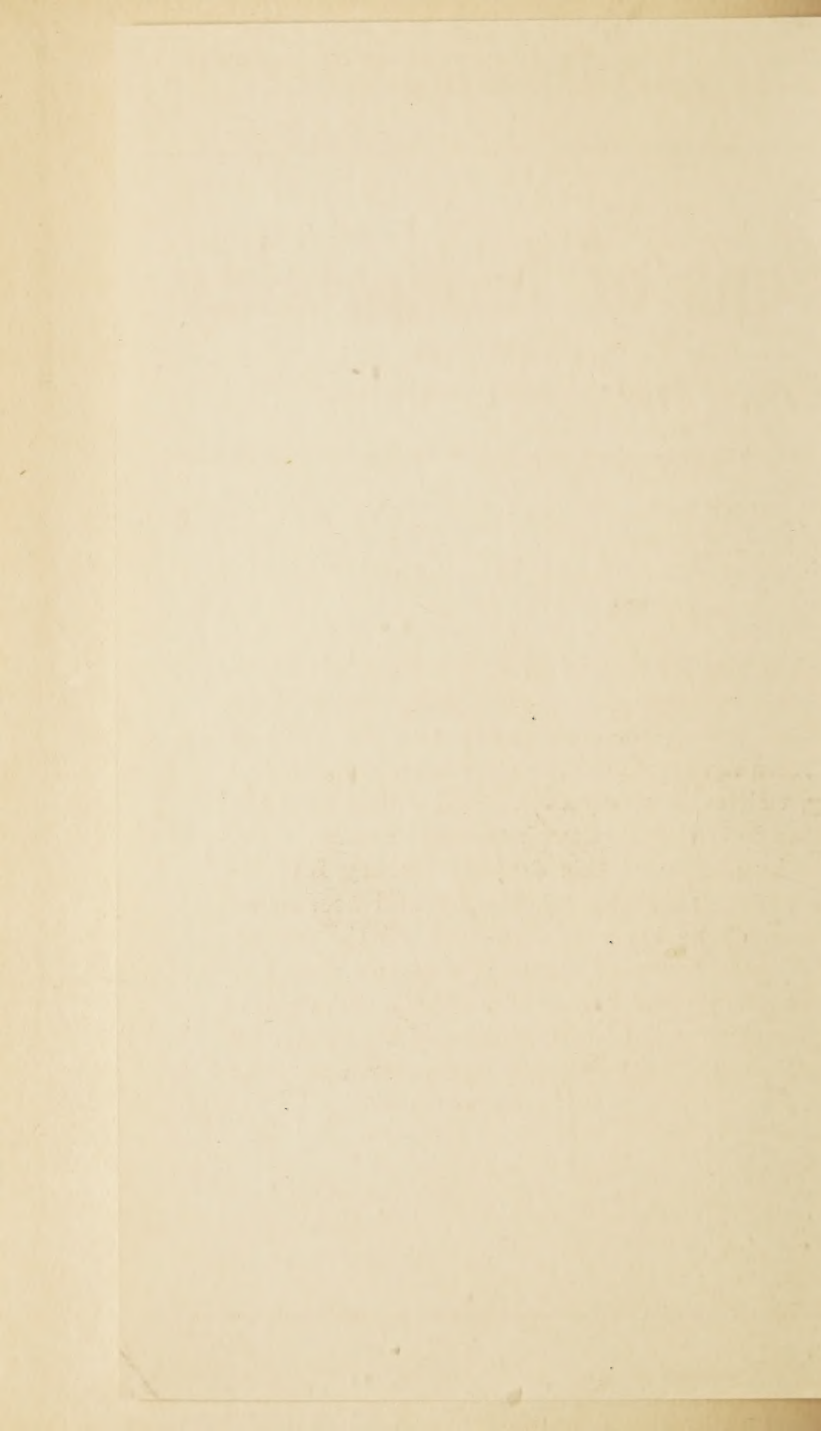
# Horizons of Immortality

By F. D. KERSHNER

*Dean of Religion, Butler University*

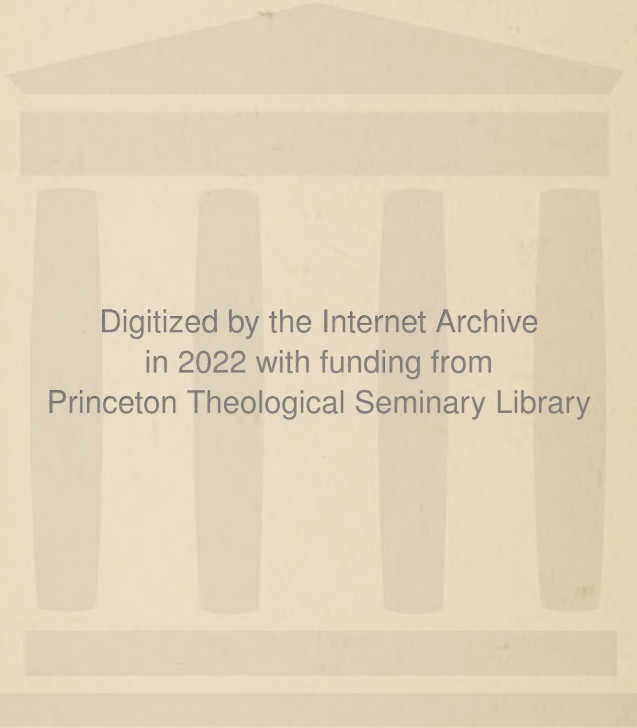
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There has long been need of such a book as "Horizons of Immortality," a book that shows the methods and conclusions about immortality reached through modern learning, together with a fresh view of Biblical teaching, written in a way that would satisfy both the scholar and the everyday practical reader. Dr. Kershner has achieved this difficult literary feat because of his training and scholarship and because of the close touch he has ever had with all the people. He writes with ease and mastery, and the reader is borne along as on the bosom of a strong, calm river, with the sense of power in the book, and kept eager by the lights which burn beyond life's far and near horizons.



HORIZONS OF IMMORTALITY





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# HORIZONS OF IMMORTALITY

THE CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY IN THE  
LIGHT OF MODERN THOUGHT

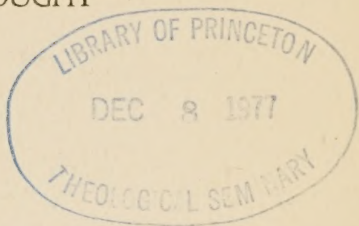
BY

FREDERICK D. KERSHNER

*Dean of Religion, Butler College*

*Author, "The Christian Union Overture," "Christian Baptism,"*

*"Sermons for Special Days," etc., etc.*



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*Ad Majorem Christi Gloriam*

*et*

*In Memoriam*

*H. L. K.*

*Quae*

*In Spe Vitae Aeternae*

*Dormiuit 26 February, 1926*



## INTRODUCTION

Dean Kershner has strengthened and enriched the faith of the church with a number of books, but *Horizons of Immortality* will take the first place among them. It deals with the subject deepest in the human heart. Man thinks he was not made to die. He does not want to "lie in the grave even though he may have princes for bed-fellows." About him ever hovers the passion for immortality no matter how completely he at times may seem to lose this surest marking of his genuine dignity and eternal worth.

This book traces that elemental conviction of humanity through dream, history, philosophy, science, literature, and reaches a convincing climax in divine revelation as it shines forth in the teachings of Jesus and his apostles.

It is a book of optimism. For I suppose Christian belief in immortality to be the essence of hope. It is the expectation of life growing from the idea that human personality is indestructible and that the goal of all good longings will be finally reached by those who seek them even though through rough and devious paths.

The book is scholarly and in that sense a book for the classroom and for the deepest thinker, but it is written with the ease and charm of simplicity that will take hold of the plainest reader and be



a source of comfort and instruction to those who seek to glimpse the stars through cypress trees. It has many Pisgah sights and "little flights of song" that lift the soul to the gates ajar.

But it is not a book of rapture, even though it has warmth and glow. It is based on fact, forged out with logic and has the weight and power that make it of permanent worth.

It is a valuable contribution to the growing volume of literature on immortality, the glow of the after life burning along the horizons of time to keep us from wasting all the precious energies of the soul in the drab and sordid business of plying the muck rake instead of standing up with radiant face to receive the crown.

B. A. ABBOTT.

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# HORIZONS OF IMMORTALITY

## PART I. PROBLEMS

*To die,—to sleep,—  
To sleep! perchance to dream!*

THE immortality of the soul is a thing  
so important that only those who have  
lost all feeling can rest indifferent to it, can  
be content to know if it is not, or if it is.

—*Pascal*

## CHAPTER 1

### IMMORTALITY AND THE TEACHING OF JESUS

**L**YOF TOLSTOI, whose enthusiasm for the ethical message of Jesus stands unrivalled in our modern age, refuses to accept the orthodox Christian doctrine of immortality. From his point of view, to possess eternal life can only mean the complete surrender of individuality in the universal life of God. He says:

As opposed to the personal life, Christ taught us, not of a life beyond the grave, but of a universal life united with the life of humanity, past, present, and to come, the life of the Son of Man.

A little later in the book from which the above quotation is taken, he appears to hedge somewhat with regard to personal immortality. Whether we live as conscious individuals after physical dissolution, or whether we do not makes no difference, in his opinion, with regard to the true meaning and value of Christ's teaching. To quote further:

But let us grant that Christ's words concerning the last judgment and the consummation of the age, and other words reported in the Gospel of John, are a promise of a life beyond the grave for the souls of mortal men,—it is none the less true that His teaching in regard to the light of life and the Kingdom of God have the same meaning for us that they had for his hearers eighteen cen-

turies ago, that is, that the only real life is the life of the Son of Man according to the Father's will.

It is easier to admit this than to admit that the doctrine of the true life contains the conception of immortality and a life beyond the grave.

Perhaps it is fairer to presuppose that man, after this terrestrial life passed in the satisfaction of personal desires, will enter upon the possession of an eternal personal life in paradise, with all imaginable enjoyments; perhaps this is fairer, but to believe that this is so, to endeavor to persuade ourselves that for our good actions we shall be recompensed with eternal felicity, and for our bad actions punished with eternal torments,—to believe this, does not aid us in understanding Christ's teaching, but, on the contrary, deprives Christ's teaching of its chief foundation.

In Tolstoi's abbreviation of the New Testament story of Christ entitled *The Gospel in Brief*, he omits all reference to the Resurrection and as far as possible to any idea of individual immortality. Likewise, in his brief essay entitled *Life*, he emphasizes his doctrine of the absorption of individual consciousness in the divine Personality. We do not have space to quote the numerous passages in this work bearing upon the subject, but anyone who will take the trouble to consult it cannot fail to be impressed by the thoroughgoing manner in which the author accepts and defends his hypothesis.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is apparently dubious concerning Jesus' advocacy of personal survival. In a well-known passage he says:

It is strange that Jesus is esteemed by mankind the bringer of the doctrine of immortality. He is never weak or sentimental, He

is very abstemious of explanation. He never preaches the personal immortality.

It would be easy to add the names of other authorities who deprecate the idea that Jesus emphasized the continuance of conscious personal life beyond the grave. There is a tendency nowadays to draw a rather sharp line of cleavage between the social and eschatological aspects of the New Testament and to claim the authority of Jesus only for the former of the two. Paul and the later apocalyptic writers, we are told, were responsible for the development of the doctrine of immortality with its consequent emphasis upon other-worldliness, while Jesus himself was concerned solely with the social content of his message concerning the Kingdom. That there is a certain degree of truth in this point of view will hardly be denied by any careful student of the New Testament. Nevertheless, there is much in the theory which runs counter not only to the plain teachings of the gospel writers themselves, but also to the obvious implications of Christian history and development. Beyond any question, the teaching of Jesus has often received a mistaken interpretation because of undue emphasis upon its eschatological and other-worldly features. Moreover, there can be no doubt but that the social message of the Nazarene for many centuries was neglected. And yet one can scarcely believe that the universal testimony



of orthodox Christendom with regard to the immortality of the soul was based upon a delusion. Doubtless the Church has frequently misunderstood and misinterpreted her Founder's teaching, but it seems inconceivable that she should have gone so far astray as the supposition in question would involve. Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant authorities alike agree that personal immortality is a presupposition of the Christian faith. The Tolstoian interpretation is Buddhistic or Brahmanistic, but is not Christian. There are, in fact, a good many points of affinity between the views of the great Russian and the religion of Gautama. It is not without significance that Gandhi, the prophet of modern India, avows himself a disciple of Tolstoi. Nor is it difficult to enumerate points of resemblance between Buddhism and Christianity. The essential difference lies precisely in the Western emphasis upon immortality and the Eastern rejection of the doctrine. There are of course certain divergences between the Christian and the Buddhist systems of ethics, but they are insignificant when compared with the cleavage we have just indicated.

When we turn to the New Testament itself in order to discover what Jesus taught concerning the life beyond the grave, we are confronted with a somewhat anomalous situation. Scarcely anyone can read the gospels without being conscious of the atmosphere of immortality which pervades

them. The tremendous emphasis upon the significance and value of the individual soul leads one to believe that a being of such worth cannot pass into nothingness after a few short years upon earth. One feels irresistibly that the whole mission of Jesus presupposes the continuance of personal existence beyond the grave. Robert Browning, when he draws the distinction between the spirit of pagan art and the new art of Christianity, rightly places the emphasis upon the Christian doctrine of immortality. Perhaps his most famous art poem, *Old Pictures in Florence*, contains this idea as its kernel:

Growth came when, looking your last on them all,  
 You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day  
 And cried with a start—What if we so small  
 Be greater and grander the while than they!  
 Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?  
 In both, of such lower types are we  
 Precisely because of our wider nature;  
 For time, theirs—ours for eternity.

In fact, one can with difficulty imagine what modern Christianity would become with the doctrine of personal immortality left out. There is no other belief so completely interwoven with the whole fabric of Christian history and experience. The most significant dogmas of the faith such as the doctrines of the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Trinity and others of like importance are scarcely so universal in the acceptance which they

have received on the part of men and women who have claimed to be Christians throughout the centuries as is the doctrine of immortality. If Christendom went astray at this particular point, the divergence was assuredly complete and universal.

The synoptic writings contain much evidence which leads to the orthodox interpretation. Aside from the accounts of the Resurrection, which Tolstoi of course rejects, there are numerous passages in the narrative which can scarcely be interpreted in any other way than as involving the acceptance of personal immortality. Such passages, among others, are the parable of the Judgment as found in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the numerous references to future consequences of present acts which obviously cannot be limited to the round of earthly experience and the straight-out affirmation of the doctrine in the reply of Jesus to the question of the Sadducees concerning the Resurrection. There is moreover the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, which even Tolstoi accepts, and sundry passages scattered through the Sermon on the Mount and in other unexpected places which require much explaining away in order to escape the implication of survival. It would be tedious to recapitulate these references inasmuch as they have become household words to all of us. Doubtless in some instances, perhaps in most of them, we have read into the text the

theological coloring of many centuries of Christian history, and yet when every allowance is made there remains a residuum which can only be eliminated by the frank rejection of the text itself.

While the above considerations must be taken into account in any fair estimate of the situation, it is only just to say that some arguments can be made for the Tolstoian theory. Personal immortality is stressed in the teaching of Jesus, but certainly far less than was true later in the history of the church. Paul says much more about it than does Jesus himself, and the theologians of the second and third centuries were more emphatic and pronounced in its advocacy than were any of the apostolic order. It seems strange at first sight that this later development should have proceeded from the foundation which we discover in the direct teachings of Jesus. Obviously, we must seek an explanation for the evolution of the doctrine outside of the gospel sources themselves. We believe, however, that it is quite possible to discover the reason or reasons for the resultant situation from a simple analysis of the facts.

As we shall see later, the influence of Platonism and of Greek philosophy in general meant much in the development of the Christian dogma of immortality. The measure of this influence in the course of Christian development is difficult to determine, but it was unquestionably both extensive

and profound. No analysis of Christian doctrine would be adequate without due allowance for the Greek thread which runs through the entire history of theology. Nevertheless, when this allowance has been made, it appears impossible to derive the remaining content of the Christian concept of immortality from the slender foundation which writers like Tolstoi and Emerson would afford us. It is inconceivable that Origen and Athanasius and Augustine and Anselm and all the rest of the galaxy of Christian theologians derived their conviction of the future life from Plato alone. Assuredly they believed the doctrine to be taught and taught unreservedly in the New Testament. It was to them an essential part of the Gospel. They never doubted that Jesus himself taught it, believed it, lived it. Of course they may have been mistaken about this as about other things, but the universal and unanimous testimony of their Christian experience must, we think, be allowed to possess evidential value.

The explanation of the entire matter, as we see it, is based upon the definition of eternal life as the term is used in the New Testament. Jesus constantly refers to the fact that He is the bearer of life and that His mission is to reveal life and immortality through the gospel. Perhaps this point of view is brought out more fully in the Gospel of John than it is in the Synoptics, but it is



present in all of the biographies of the Nazarene. John uses the expression, "eternal life" about seventeen times in the gospel and some six times in the epistles. It is worth recalling some of the passages in which this expression occurs. In the discourse upon the Bread of Life, Jesus says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." Again, in the account of the resurrection of Lazarus, we have this statement: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." In the great Intercessory Prayer, we have the term defined: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." At the conclusion of the parable of the Good Shepherd, Jesus sums up his mission in the famous passage: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The meaning involved in all these passages is quite obviously that eternal life is not simply something which comes after death, but that it is an immediate and present possession of those who become the followers of Jesus. As Harnack puts it, the gospel means in its essence, "eternal life in the midst of time by the strength and under the eyes of God." Jesus does not say much about the

future life because to him it is identical with the present life. As Pringle-Pattison expresses it,

Eternal life is not a state of existence to follow upon physical death, but an all-satisfying present experience of the love of God in Christ. It is, as the theologians say, participation in the being of the spiritual Christ! This is the eternal life in the midst of time which is claimed by the saints as an immediate experience, one to which considerations of time are, in fact, indifferent, because we are at rest in the present.

It may be said that the Buddhistic interpretation of absorption in Nirvana accepted by Tolstoi can still be made to fit into the above passages. Tolstoi himself quotes some of them in support of his theory, and yet to the writer at least, it seems impossible to draw such a meaning from any fair exegesis of the language, considered as a whole. Certainly those who heard these words did not understand them in a Buddhistic sense any more than the later church theologians so understood them. When Jesus spoke of the more abundant life, it is inconceivable that his hearers should have understood him to mean the extinction of their own conscious personalities. Had they so understood him, they could never later have preached the gospel of the resurrection. It must always be remembered that the New Testament writers themselves accepted the orthodox exegesis of their Master's words; there appears to be no exception to this statement. It was left for much

later interpreters to derive the gospel of Nirvana from the words of Jesus.

It is obvious that any doctrine of unity with Christ and of consequent unity with God carries with it the possibility of misinterpretation at this point. Doubtless no minister of our modern age accepted the orthodox view of immortality more thoroughly than George Matheson, and yet it is quite possible to read the Tolstoian view into Matheson's most famous poetical production, "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go." When the poet says:

I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be,

it is quite easy to draw the conclusion that he meant absorption in Nirvana or in the one universal Life of the world. Even the concluding verse with its splendid reference to immortality may with little effort yield a similar meaning:

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be!

Now it is quite conceivable that if the facts concerning the author's belief in personal immortality were unknown, the above words might be interpreted in harmony with the Buddhistic philosophy.

The life which is endless and which blossoms red from the ground to an Oriental mind might easily refer to the universal Being who occupies the first place in the Pantheistic interpretation of reality. How thoroughly incorrect such an exegesis is, may be discovered by referring to the authoritative biography of the Scotch minister written by his friend, D. Macmillan. The latter says:

If there was one subject more than another in which Matheson was deeply interested, it was immortality. It is the theme of his earliest and of his latest writings. There is hardly a book or an article written by him in which there is not some reference to it. It was with him a subject of perennial interest. Nor was there any question to which he had given a more definite answer. He had no doubt concerning it. He believed as strongly in the immortality of the soul as he did in his own personality. Some may think that the reason of his absorbing interest in this subject was the fact of his being blind. It was natural that he should look forward to another world in which the film would be taken from his eyes and he could see the "King in his beauty." Matheson had formed to himself a very vivid conception of what the hereafter was to be like. He had created a "new heaven and a new earth," and in moments of frank communication he gave his friends a glimpse of what he himself saw; but his hope of immortality arose from another cause. As a spiritually minded man, as a Christian theologian, as one who had pondered the problems which face all serious men, he felt that there could be no escape from a belief in this great doctrine. The very idea of God made it necessary to his thinking, and the Christian religion would fall to pieces were the doctrine of immortality to be blotted out.

Matheson's interpretation of the subject appears to the writer to be singularly in harmony with the facts. Grounding as he does the whole matter in

the mystical union of the believer with Christ, he nevertheless interprets this union in terms of conscious personal immortality. As Macmillan puts it,

The believer who is mystically united with Christ, who is a member of His divine body, is bound to be a sharer in that life which Christ brought to light. The power of Christ in the believing soul will make it eternal, and the glorified body of Christ will also be shared in by the Christian.

“When Jesus uses such figures as the Vine and the Branches, the Door, the Resurrection and the Life, above all when He attaches such mystical and vital significance to partaking of His body and His blood, we can readily understand the meaning of His teaching concerning immortality. Since He is the Life, death has no power over Him, and those who are His followers because they are partakers of His life must also be delivered from the fear and power of death. The true teaching of Jesus concerning immortality is mystical and vital rather than mechanical. This does not mean, however, that it involves the loss of individual consciousness. Rather does it mean the perfection and enriching of our undeveloped earthly personalities. The future will not mean less of personal self-knowledge to each one of us, but rather more. Here we know our own selves only in part, there we shall know even as we are known. In the Father’s house, there are many rooms and it



shall be our privilege and joy to explore these rooms throughout eternity.

The teaching of Jesus concerning personal survival after the experience we call death is therefore simple and clear. He looked upon the dissolution of the material body as a matter of such slight consequence as to demand only the most casual treatment. Those who have entered into the true life, the life of the spirit, in the very nature of things cannot be subject to the power of death. It was a true instinct which led the church theologians from the beginning to stress the gospel of personal immortality as an essential feature of the Master's teaching. Unfortunately, they sometimes interpreted his words in mechanical and legalistic fashion instead of giving them the vital connotation which they deserve. Nevertheless, their persistent witness to the core of Christ's teaching upon the subject rings truer to the facts than the modern attempts to Orientalize the message of Jesus in the interest of a new philosophical fashion.

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2. L. Tolstoi, *The Gospel in Brief*. Chapter XI.
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7. D. Macmillan, *The Life of George Matheson*. Chapter VI.

## CHAPTER II

### IMMORTALITY AND THE TEACHING OF PAUL

**P**AUL is usually regarded as the great protagonist of the orthodox Christian view of immortality. Perhaps a good deal of this feeling is derived from the prominence given to the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians in the burial service of practically all Christian communions. The language here is so clear and emphatic that there is no possibility of misunderstanding it. Even Tolstoi does not try to make out Paul to be a Pantheist. Nowhere else in literature is the doctrine of conscious personal survival after death asserted more fully and completely than it is in this famous passage.

In view of the considerations noted above, it seems rather strange that an authority so eminent as Professor George B. Stevens should say concerning the Pauline theology, "No part of the apostle's teaching is developed with so little of systematic fulness as the doctrine of the future life." Professor Stevens concedes, however, that upon the subject of individual immortality there is no possibility of misunderstanding Paul's position. He believed in it, preached it, taught it, and

transmitted it to his successors and followers. There is some question as to whether his conception of the resurrection included the wicked as well as the righteous, as we shall see later, but of the fact that he taught a personal resurrection of the individual Christian there can be no doubt. Paul stakes the whole case for Christianity upon the fact of Christ's conquest of death, carrying with it as it does the certainty of future life for Christ's followers. No language could be stronger than words like these: "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised, and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain," or these words of still more emphatic import: "For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable."

The Pauline eschatology, like the Pauline theology in general, can best be understood by giving due allowance to the educational and philosophical background of the apostle. Paul, it should always be remembered, was a Pharisee. He had received his education under the most eminent teacher of this school and the impression produced by his early training remained indelibly stamped upon

his mind. Of course his later Christian experience took precedence over the instructions of Gamaliel, but there can be little doubt that the latter's views, perhaps for the most part unconsciously, were of great significance in the evolution of the Pauline theology. To many interpreters, the rigid predestinarian sections to be found in certain of Paul's epistles are best explained by the fatalistic background which his thinking received from his Pharisee teachers. In like manner, his views of the future life were undoubtedly colored by the instruction he had received in his youth. It was one of the cardinal tenets of the Pharisees that the soul is immortal, their teaching upon the subject harmonizing in no slight degree with the Platonic school of Greek philosophy. According to this view, the soul is inherently indestructible and must therefore survive the experience of death. The Sadducees rejected this view entirely, believing in neither angels nor the resurrection. Paul's adherence to the current Pharisaical teaching is clearly brought out in the twenty-third chapter of Acts where, upon the occasion of his trial before Ananias, the apostle cried out in the council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." It is inconceivable that Paul should have misrepresented his actual views upon this occasion simply in order to make a point.

That his hearers understood his meaning is clear from the fact that a dissension at once arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were present, the former taking the apostle's part despite their antipathy to him as a Christian. A little later when Paul defended himself before Felix in opposition to the speech of Tertullus, he makes it an essential part of his apology that he has "hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust." Still later, in his defense before King Agrippa, Paul asks the question, "Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?" In his speech on Mars Hill, some years before, he had closed his discourse by saying that God commands all men everywhere to repent "inasmuch as he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead." There is scarcely one of the Pauline letters which does not contain some reference to the general judgment. It is difficult to understand the significance of such a judgment unless there is the implication of a general resurrection, as the apostle himself said, "both of the just and the unjust."

Notwithstanding the facts above cited, there are many modern theologians who hold to the view that



Paul nowhere teaches the resurrection of the unjust but only of those who have become immortal through their mystical union with Christ. While somewhat guarded in his statements, this in the main is the position held by Professor Stevens. He says:

In regard to the question whether Paul believed in a resurrection of the godless, the following points must be remembered,—(a) that he nowhere speaks in his epistles (cf., however, Acts 24:15) of a general resurrection of all mankind, (b) that he twice (1 Thess. 4:16, 1 Cor. 15:23) speaks explicitly of a resurrection of Christians, as if he thought of it as a distinct event, (c) that his whole argument for the fact of a resurrection is based upon Christ's resurrection as its ground and guaranty, and (d) that the application of this argument is made to Christians alone. It is certain that Paul has said nothing—even in the most casual or indirect way—of a resurrection of non-believers. Whether he held to such a resurrection notwithstanding the fact that he has not alluded to it, or whether he has not alluded to it because he did not hold it, is a matter for conjecture.

Elsewhere Stevens tries to break the force of the Pauline references to a general judgment by saying that while they create a certain presumption in favor of a universal resurrection "they do not conclusively prove a positive opinion on Paul's part." Professor Simpson, in his recent work entitled, *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*, argues for the same position. His language is much stronger than that of Stevens: "In none of St. Paul's writings," he says, "is there any suggestion of a resurrection of the wicked." It is true

that he sees traces of the survival of the Pharisaical eschatology in the Pauline epistles, but he regards these as insignificant. To use his own language, "St. Paul evidently kept some of the old eschatological pictures of his early days in his mind, but our duty in interpretation is to follow the main line of his religious experience." He gets rid of the reference to the universal resurrection in Acts 24:15 by agreeing with Professor Kennedy that in his report of Paul's speech Luke aimed to give as Judaistic a coloring as possible to the apostle's words. Other references to the judgment are treated in similar fashion. Of course Professor Simpson's object, as we shall see later, is to sustain his general theory of "immortability" as opposed to the ordinary doctrine of immortality.

In whatever way we may account for the fact, it will scarcely be disputed that Christian theology as a whole has understood Paul's teaching to be clearly in favor of a universal resurrection. From the days of Augustine onward, there was little hesitancy with regard to the matter. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and the Protestant theologians in general were quite as emphatic in regard to the question as were their Roman Catholic predecessors and contemporaries. It does not appear to have occurred to them that there could be any doubt about the apostle's convictions upon the subject. Of course the influence of Greek thought proper

and of other similar considerations may have had something to do with their views. Whatever the cause, the fact remains that the Pauline doctrine of immortality in their minds coincided clearly with the Greek view of the inherent immortality of the human soul.

To the writer at least, the difficulty involved in harmonizing the different threads in the Pauline eschatology arises chiefly from the fact that the apostle himself, as Professor Stevens says, does not appear to have organized them into a consistent system. We find decided traces of the old Pharisaical theories along with the conception of mystical unity with Christ so constantly emphasized in the gospels. The two things do not harmonize precisely, and Paul does not appear to have tried to work them up into an orderly system. Like most men who are concerned primarily with practical problems, he refused to allow his interest in the main issues before him to be lessened by apparent inconsistencies in certain strands of his thinking. Beyond any doubt, the later mystical and vital union with Christ to which he refers so often in his writings took the place of his earlier Pharisaical views without, however, entirely supplanting them. It is in this way, too, that we must understand many of his references to predestination. It was the misfortune of the Middle Age theologians and of most of their Protestant suc-

cessors that they stressed the accidental and earlier threads in the Pauline theology to the exclusion of the later and more vital conceptions of the Apostle.

Paul's teaching concerning the resurrection and its value as evidence of the reality of the future life occupies a position midway between his earlier and later points of view. In its logical and scientific aspects, it bears affinity to the earlier Greek and Hebrew viewpoint. On the other hand, it is linked directly to the Johannine thought of eternal life through direct and complete unity with Christ. Because Christ has been raised from the dead, those who are Christ's followers shall also be raised with him. The case throughout, as Professor Stevens has taken pains to emphasize, is based upon the mystical rather than the universal concept of the resurrection. It is indeed somewhat difficult to reconcile the argument with the Greek theory of the inherent immortality of the soul. On the basis of the latter hypothesis, it would scarcely seem necessary to go to such extremes as Paul does in order to prove the resurrection from the dead.

In the light of present conditions, it seems somewhat unfortunate that theology as a whole should have placed such exclusive emphasis upon the Graeco-Pharisaic side of the Pauline eschatology. The influences which led to this development, how-

ever, appear simple enough in the light of historic investigation. In order to understand the problems which confront us today in this particular field, it is necessary that we should next review the circumstances which produced what is usually termed the orthodox Christian view of immortality.

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### CHAPTER III

#### THE GREEK CONCEPTION OF IMMORTALITY

THERE is a certain parallel between the early Hebrew and the early Greek views of immortality. Whether this fact arose as the result of a common source or whether it represents merely a natural coincidence need not at this time concern us. There were points of contact between the Greeks and the Hebrews, as the early Christian apologists were fond of emphasizing, and it may well be that a common tradition lay back of their concepts of the future life. The Hebrew Sheol and the Greek Hades as the latter term is used in Homer and Hesiod are practically identical. In both instances, there appears to have been a primitive and shadowy belief in the survival of the soul. Over this twilight territory, in early Jewish thinking, Jehovah had no control. Hezekiah, for example, in returning thanks for his recovery uses the expressive language, "Sheol cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." Such references are rather numerous in the Old Testament writings. The uncertain and hazy picture of



the future life which they give led naturally to the dual development of Sadducaic and Pharisaic theology. The one proceeded to a definite and concrete belief in personal immortality, while the other denied the after life altogether. This development, however, came rather late in the history of the Hebrew people.

Among the Greeks, Hades, like Sheol, was at first merely the land of shades. Homer draws a vivid picture of this uncertain and undesirable state in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*: "Rather would I live on ground as the hireling of another, than to bear sway among all the dead that are departed." The picture which we gather from the *Iliad* is similarly depressing. The very opening lines of the poem refer to "Pluto's gloomy reign" and this coloring is maintained throughout the pages of the epic. In substance, we are given to understand that we know very little about Hades and what we do know is unattractive.

The development of the Greek idea of immortality appears to have started from the post-Homeric cult of Dionysus which inspired the Greek mysteries and which was responsible for the beginning of Greek tragedy as well as of all that was vital in Greek theology. In the Dionysian rites, the union of the worshiper with his Deity is constantly emphasized. It is this union which constituted the basic teaching of the Orphic reli-

gious brotherhoods which became such tremendous factors in Greek history and life. We do not of course possess full information as to the mysteries but there seems to be no doubt that the essential principle involved in their multiform rites and ceremonies was that of communion in the most direct fashion with the Deity. They also taught the idea of regeneration and cleansing from sin, in part by means of ceremonial observances. Gradually the Orphic teachers elaborated a scheme of rewards and punishments in the other world quite analogous to the eschatological system of Mediaeval Christianity. Plato in the *Republic* denounces in the strongest language the abuses of the quacks and soothsayers of his day who crowd around rich men's doors and play upon their superstitions by saying:

They have a divine power which enables them through sacrifices and incantations to atone for any sin whether committed by the man himself or by his ancestors, and further that if he should desire to work injury to anyone this can be arranged for at trifling expense, whether the object of his hostility be a just or an unjust man, for they profess that by certain spells and enchantments they can prevail upon the gods to do their bidding.

Obviously such practices point to a very highly elaborated eschatological system. They have a certain modern ring about them in the light of Martin Luther's experiences at the time of the Protestant Reformation.

Just how far the Dionysiac cults paved the way for the later Greek doctrine of immortality is somewhat difficult to say. Doctor Farnell in his volume entitled, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* advocates the view that their influence was basic and profound. He thinks that their gospel of the salvation of the individual and their dogmas of future retribution and sacramental redemption were of the most vital importance in the later development of religion. There appears to be no question that Pythagoras and his school were related to the Orphic movement, although there was a tendency at one time to cast some doubt upon their affinity. Later investigation tends to make the relationship clearer. In like manner, Plato seems to have derived at least some of his views from the Orphics. It is true that he criticizes the cults rather unsparingly and yet many of his ideas are identical with their teachings. In almost all of the passages in his Dialogues where he expounds the doctrine of immortality, he uses Orphic formulations and imagery. As a consequence not a few Platonic interpreters derive his teachings concerning the future life from the influence of the Mystery religions.

On the other hand, the central feature in Plato's doctrine of immortality is essentially opposed to the Orphic viewpoint. The guarantee of future existence afforded by the Mysteries consisted in the

union of the worshiper with the Deity and without such union no continued existence could be predicated. In other words, the soul could become immortal as the result of certain definite conditions or processes, but possessed in itself no promise of eternal life. Now this is precisely the opposite of the Platonic doctrine. Immortality to the great Greek philosopher was inherent in the nature of the soul and could not be taken from it or destroyed. He says in the *Laws*:

When we are dead, the bodies of the dead are justly said to be our shades or images, for the true and immortal being of each one of us, which is called the soul, goes on her way to other gods, that before them she may give an account.

The *Laws* probably contains Plato's final word on the subject, but the statement we have quoted is fairly representative of his thinking throughout his life. The chief argument for immortality which he advances in the *Phaedo* is that of the simple substantiality of the soul by virtue of which it is necessarily indestructible and on this account must remain untouched by death. Jowett, who ranks as the Greek philosopher's most sympathetic and penetrating interpreter, at least during modern times, sums up the situation in these words:

If we ask what is that truth or principle which, towards the end of his life, seems to have absorbed Plato most, like the idea of good in the *Republic*, or of beauty in the *Symposium*, or of the unity of virtue in the *Protagoras*, we should answer, the priority of the soul to the body.



Plato, of course, believed in pre-existence and in an intermediate state of rewards and purgatorial punishments after death. In the *Phaedrus*, he works out an eschatological scheme which provides for the return of souls to earth somewhat along the lines of the Hindu religions. Absolutely hopeless individuals are cast down to Tartarus much after the manner in which Mediaeval theology condemned those dying in mortal sin to the Inferno. Those, however, who died without being completely purified were obliged to return to earth for cycles of from three to ten thousand years. After being purified as a result of repeated experiences of good and evil in the material world, they passed on to Elysium. As to the nature of the soul itself, he says, "The soul is immortal because its very idea and essence is the self-moved or self-moving, that which is the fountain and beginning of motion to all that moves besides. A body which is moved from without is soulless, but that which is moved from within has a soul."

Plato's teaching involved a distinct dualism between mind and matter which was productive of the most important consequences in later thinking. Throughout his philosophy runs the contrast between the real world, the world of Ideas and the quasi-real world of everyday existence. The human soul occupied a species of intermediate position between these two worlds, having definite



connections with both of them. The well-known figure of the Charioteer illustrates the difficult relationship involved in this situation. By virtue of his higher kinship, man is a partaker of immortality, but it is possible for him to be dragged down to a lower level as a result of his material environment. Hence it becomes necessary to mortify the body in order that the soul may live and grow. Out of this fundamental dualism arose most of the ascetic practices of the Christian and other later religions.

The arguments by which Plato sustained his belief in personal immortality are peculiarly unsatisfying to the modern mind. He places much reliance upon the doctrine of pre-existence, a theory which modern psychology has practically eliminated. He also emphasizes the argument from the necessity of opposites. In other words, if we have death, we must have life, and vice versa. It is quite easy to see that this argument proves too much. As Pringle-Pattison says, "It would be possible to prove on the same principles a perpetual alternation between drunk and sober." The doctrine of the unity of the soul as a simple and therefore indestructible substance has survived longer than the other proofs and still holds its place in the writings of a few philosophers. Nevertheless, like so many other proofs, it is of value chiefly for those who already believe what is to

be proved. If one is convinced for any reason that the soul is simple and indivisible, of course it is easy for him to accept the idea that it will persist after death, but if he accepts the prevailing psychological definition of the ego, no such conclusion will result. There appears to be some question as to whether Plato regarded immortality as a characteristic of all souls alike or only as appertaining to the higher rational faculties. In other words, through the higher reason we become citizens of the world of Ideas and therefore enter into its heritage of immortality. If, however, we sacrifice our birthright by failing to maintain communion with this higher reality it would seem that our divine inheritance would disappear. At this point, we come nearer to the Orphic view of conditional immortality. As a matter of fact, in Platonic as in Christian thinking, the two threads are frequently interwoven and it is sometimes difficult to separate them.

Aristotle approached the subject under discussion from the point of view of the scientist rather than the philosopher. Starting with what he calls the nutritive or vegetative soul, he adds, in an ascending scale, the sensitive soul belonging to the lower animals and, at the apex, the rational soul which is the peculiar distinction of man. Each of these stages develops from the one immediately preceding it and retains the characteristics which

it inherits. It is in this connection that the philosopher emphasizes his fundamental distinction between the potential and the actual or between the formal and the material elements in reality. The earlier stages of life contain the higher stage potentially but not actually. The soul thus evolves out of the body, or as Aristotle himself puts it, is "the functioning of the body at its highest level." In this theory of progressive development, Aristotle escapes from the dualism of Plato and anticipates much of our modern thinking upon the subject. It does not require a great deal of imagination to deduce the Bergsonian theory of creative evolution from the Aristotelian position. The soul evolves out of the body instead of the body being the mere shadow of the soul.

We have dealt in the most sketchy and outline fashion with the profound questions involved in this chapter. Nevertheless, we trust that the essential contribution of Greek thought to the problem of immortality has been made sufficiently clear. The immense significance of this contribution in the development of Christian dogma deserves more detailed treatment at our hands. In a very real sense it is quite impossible to understand Christian theology without an adequate acquaintance with its background of Greek philosophy. From Athanasius and Augustine to Calvin and Ritschl the leaders of Christian thought knew their Plato

and knew it well. During the Middle Ages, especially, Plato and Aristotle were the chief inspirers of theological speculation. The orthodox dogma of immortality, while fundamentally derived from the New Testament, received much coloring and support from the thinkers of Hellas. We must turn now to consider the nature and extent of this influence.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE INFLUENCE OF GREEK THOUGHT UPON THE CHRISTIAN DOGMA OF IMMORTALITY

THERE is a famous passage in the eighteenth book of *The City of God* in which St. Augustine bears witness to his high regard and affection for Plato. He says:

Some of us liking and loving Plato for a certain eloquent and excellent kind of speaking and because his opinion has been true in some things, say that he thought something like unto that which we do, concerning the resurrection of the dead, which thing Tully so touches in his *De Republica* that he affirms that he rather spake in sport, than that he had any intent to relate it, as a matter of truth. For he declares a man revived, and related some things agreeable to Plato's disputations. Labeo also says that there were two which died both in one day, and that they met together in a crossway, and that afterward they were commanded to return again to their bodies, and then that they decreed to live in perpetual love together, and that it was so until they died afterward.

Augustine then goes on to cite other instances from pagan writers which prove the resurrection of the body and refers them to the followers of Plato and Porphyry as evidence that the Christian position is true. The passage is only one out of many in the works of the great Christian theologian which show his thorough esteem for the writings of the Athenian philosopher. Augustine in fact



owed his conversion to Christianity largely to Plato. The connecting link between his Manichaean experience and his later orthodox Catholicism was furnished by Plato and Plotinus. By means of the neo-Platonic monism he was delivered from the dualistic scheme of Manes and was prepared intellectually for the acceptance of the Christian dogma. It was only natural that he should have carried over into Christianity much of the Platonic philosophy. In fact, Augustinianism which exerted such profound influence upon later theology is fundamentally a compound of Paulinism and Platonism with sundry other subsidiary features derived in part from the personal experience of the great thinker and from the historical circumstances of the age in which he lived.

Augustine did not of course entirely agree with Plato. Wherever there appears to him to be a real conflict between the Athenian teacher and the words of Holy Writ, the latter have the right of way. Even in such instances, however, he expresses his regret and as far as possible tones down the contradiction. The essential features of the Augustinian doctrine of immortality, which later came to be the accepted viewpoint of the church as a whole, may be summarized after the following fashion: First, God is the creator of all souls, good and bad alike; second, dependent upon the will of God, all souls are inherently immortal;

third, there will be a resurrection of the bodies which have perished as a result of death, these bodies rejoining the souls which formerly inhabited them and receiving after the general judgment either eternal bliss or eternal punishment in accordance with their deeds upon earth and with the will of God. In support of these contentions, Augustine cites certain proof-texts from the New Testament and appeals to their infallibility in the same way that the advocates of verbal inspiration have always done throughout the centuries. He refers to the Resurrection and to other miracles as evidence of the future life, but his main line of argument is based upon his theory of the nature of God and of the essential relations existing between God and man. For example, his argument against the Platonists' position that it is impossible that a material body can be taken up into heaven is based entirely upon the omnipotence of God:

Why then cannot God that made this creature, transport an earthly body into heaven, as well as he can bring a soul (a purer essence than any celestial body) down from heaven and inclose it in a form of earth? Can this little piece of earth include so excellent a nature in it, and live by it, and cannot heaven entertain it, nor keep it in it, seeing that it lives by an essence more excellent than heaven itself!

From the Augustinian point of view, there is literally nothing impossible to the Divine Nature. Souls will live hereafter because God so wills it and has so created human spirits. Moreover, our

material bodies will be resurrected and will live in heaven. (Here Augustine disagrees with Plato and with the Platonic school generally.) Furthermore, the fires of hell are of such a character that they will consume these material bodies eternally and in such fashion that they will never become insensible:

Wherefore though our flesh now be such that it cannot suffer all pain, without dying, yet then shall it become of another nature, as death also then shall be of another nature for the death then shall be eternal, and the soul that suffers it shall neither be able to live, having lost her God, her only life, nor yet to avoid torment, having lost all means of death. The first death forces her from the body against her will, and the second holds her in the body against her will.

He then goes on to cite the case of the salamander which, "as the most exact naturalists record," lives in fire, and also of certain hills in Sicily that have been on fire continually "from beyond the memory of man, and yet remain whole and unconsumed" as sufficient proofs that it is possible for bodies to remain undiminished in fire. Furthermore, the incorporeal devils who do not have bodies like human beings will also suffer the torments of perdition throughout eternity. In Chapter Ten of the seventeenth book of *The City of God*, he presents his argument for this position:

But that hell, that lake of fire and brimstone, shall be real, and the fire corporeal, burning both men and devils, the one in flesh and the other in air: the one in the body adherent to the spirit, and

the other in the spirit only adherent to the fire, and yet not infusing life, but feeling torment, for one fire shall torment both men and devils. Christ has spoken it.

It would be tedious, and we think unnecessary, to quote further from Augustine with regard to the question of immortality. It is obvious throughout his writings that he believed his theology to be derived entirely from the Scriptures and yet any careful student of his life cannot but realize that the unconscious influence of Platonism and of Greek thought generally were the guiding principles in his exegesis. The eternal substance of the soul, the impossibility of dissolving or destroying it, the stern schedule of rewards and punishments, these things all come fundamentally by way of Hellas. Dante, who reflects Augustine, or at least the Augustinian eschatology with extraordinary fidelity, turns to the Greek Tartarus directly for material for his *Inferno*. Obviously, the final teaching of the church during the Mediaeval period was derived, as Loisy frankly admits, from a synthesis of many divergent elements, but there was no characteristic more important than the contribution made by the great Greek philosophers.

The early Christian fathers beginning with Clement of Alexandria did not agree with Augustine at all points concerning the future life. Origen, for example, accepted the doctrine of restitution and of ultimate universal restoration. Jerome in all probability held similar views. Even



in these instances, however, the Platonic influence is no less marked than it is in Augustine. Clément of Alexandria in particular was a disciple and admirer of the Athenian philosopher and held that he was in all essential respects a Christian. The influence of neo-Platonism upon the Alexandrian school has been frequently emphasized. As many recent authorities have pointed out, there is much in the system of Plotinus which passed over into Christian theology. We are concerned here only with the subject of immortality, but in this particular field no less than in others the indebtedness of Christian dogma to both the earlier and the later Greek thinkers is extensive and profound.

For many centuries after the period of the general councils, as Canon Farrar puts it, "the dark shadow of Augustine" was thrown so powerfully over the current theology that there was little question about the endlessness of torment or of any of the other sombre eschatological features in the writings of the great Bishop of Hippo. In process of time, the stern rigidity of the Augustinian teaching became intolerable for even the Mediaeval conscience and as a result the doctrine of purgatory was evoked to soften it. Scotus Erigena, it should be said, in the period between Augustine and Anselm appears to have approached the early Johanneine conception of the future life more nearly than the orthodox theologians but there is some question as to whether he did not pass over into real



Pantheism. While the church generally accepted the doctrine of purgatory, it held also to the old Augustinian views of the eternal torment of the impenitent and of the eternal happiness of the redeemed. The earlier teachings concerning a final judgment and the eschatological situation in general were accepted as commonplaces of religion. The Mediaeval mind was essentially other-worldly and ascetic in its temper. The life beyond to most adherents of the church was more real than the present existence. Every day on earth was lived, so to speak, in the presence of the here-after and life itself was regarded in the light of a gloomy pilgrimage to the highlands of eternity. It is scarcely to be questioned that the conviction of personal immortality was more pronounced and more unhesitating during the Mediaeval era than at any other time in the history of the world. Heaven and hell were supreme realities, and no earthly assize could be more certain or inescapable than the great final judgment which Michelangelo has pictured on the wall of the Sistine Chapel. Doubtless there were a few skeptics even during these days, but they were uninfluential and for the most part unknown. In the current state of mind of both rulers and people, it was not wholesome to entertain or to express doubts concerning any of these important matters. A generation which accepted with literal exactness the

gruesome details of the hell of Dante and Augustine was not squeamish about the infliction of punishments in this material world. No offense against the moral law was looked upon as more serious than theological heresy. Under the circumstances, people who had doubts preferred to keep them to themselves or put them aside as simply suggestions of the devil with a view to the eternal destruction of their souls.

In the finely spun and almost interminable discussions of the Schoolmen, covering as it would seem almost everything in the world or out of it, there is no essential difference concerning the doctrine of the future life. From Anselm to Occam, all of them were agreed as concerning the immortality of the soul and the general schedule of future rewards and punishments. St. Anselm in the seventy-second chapter of the *Monologium* has admirably summed up the thought of the period in the words, "Every human soul is immortal. And it is either forever miserable, or at some time purely blessed."

In the discussion of this proposition, which serves as the theme of the chapter, Anselm proves that even the souls of infants are immortal because all human spirits are of the same nature and since the redeemed are eternally blessed, therefore the characteristic of immortality must appertain to all. To quote his own language:

But undoubtedly all human souls are of the same nature. Hence, since it is established that some are immortal, every human soul must be immortal. But since every living being is either never, or at some time, truly secure from all trouble, necessarily also, every human soul is either ever miserable, or at some time truly blessed.

With the rediscovery of Plato and Aristotle in the original, scholasticism became more pronouncedly Hellenistic than before. The Platonic ideas furnished the basis of the philosophy of Realism while Nominalism drew its inspiration from the principles of Aristotle. Practically every Mediaeval theologian was either a Platonist or an Aristotelian or a combination of the two. Marsilio Ficino was not the only student of his age who kept a votive lamp burning continually before the bust of Plato, nor was Mirandola the only devout Catholic who, as Streeter says, "devoted all his passionate power to the reconciliation of Platonism and Christianity." Humanism itself was simply an illustration of the preponderance of the classical influence over its Christian setting. The Schoolmen proper did not go so far, but the subconscious influence of the great classical philosophers upon their lives was none the less extensive and profound. The Greek concept of immortality passed into Christian thought and became an integral part of the orthodox Christian eschatology.

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## CHAPTER V

### IMMORTALITY AND THE CREEDS

THE statements concerning the future life which are found in the Ecumenical creeds are plain and simple assertions of the commonly accepted thinking upon the subject. The general judgment, the second coming of Christ, the life everlasting, the resurrection of the body (the latter term interpreted in various ways), and other somewhat general expressions make up the substance of the eschatological material. It must be said that there is room for considerable difference of opinion as to the implications of some of these creedal provisions. There is little reason to doubt that those who formulated these standards of faith held to the prevailing views of the inherent immortality of the soul and the Graeco-Christian position in general. At the same time, the more distinctly mystical interpretation of eternal life undoubtedly found a place in the thought of not a few of these early theologians. Perhaps this interpretation was more often unconscious than conscious, but in any event it blossoms forth in the pages of their writings at times under the most unexpected circumstances.



With the dawn of the reformation, the Mediaeval doctrine of immortality held full sway throughout the church. Protestantism for the most part went back of the scholastics to Augustine and to Paul, the latter interpreted always in the light of the teachings of the former. There were certain eschatological details concerning which the new movement as a whole diverged widely from the Roman Catholic viewpoint. The doctrine of indulgences which furnished the immediate occasion of Martin Luther's rebellion constituted one of these points of difference. The dogma of purgatory in general speedily came under the Protestant ban and was universally rejected by the reformers. Augustine knows nothing of purgatory and Calvin and Luther as we have seen went back directly to Augustine. As a consequence, the teaching of current Protestant theology concerning the future life was harsher, more sombre, and more antithetical to our modern standards than was the parallel doctrine of Roman Catholicism. Aquinas toned down the rigors of the Augustinian Inferno and the Roman Catholics accepted this modified position while the Protestants reverted to the most extreme forms of the earlier eschatology. Calvin's hell is if anything worse than Augustine's, and Protestantism almost without exception followed Calvin in his views of the subject. The culmination of this morbid eschatology is found in the sermons of Jonathan

9 Edwards which have become classics in this particular field. Canon Farrar quotes as an illustration of Edwards' teaching this passage from his sermon entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,"

The God that holds you over the pit of hell much in the same way as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked

and inquires whether this is to be regarded as orthodox teaching or not. He also quotes from the contemporary discourses of Mr. Charles H. Spurgeon to the following effect:

Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God, and it shall be written, "Forever." When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torment they shall say, "Forever!" When they howl, Echo cries, "Forever!"

"Forever" is written on their racks,  
"Forever" on their chains,  
"Forever" burneth in the fire,  
"Forever," ever reigns.

In the commentaries of Adam Clarke, Matthew Henry, and other authoritative Protestant interpreters, we find expressions very similar to those used by Edwards and Spurgeon. Clarke especially appears to take delight in harrowing the feelings of his readers by the most elaborate comments upon the Scriptural passages which refer to the undying worm and the unquenchable fire. This type of exegesis was practically universal

on the part of Protestant evangelists and the clergy in general. Even in our own age the sermons of many evangelists are saturated with it. During the last half century, the pulpit as a whole, as Canon Gore so aptly says, has discarded the doctrine, but there has been no serious attempt to revise creedal standards in the interest of the new interpretation.

The Roman Catholic eschatology is given in authoritative fashion in the decrees of the Council of Trent. In this historic document, the doctrines of purgatory, indulgences, and the future state in general are expressed, for the most part, in harmony with the views of Aquinas and his contemporaries. In Session VI, Canon 30, we find the following statement:

If any one saith, that after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner, the guilt is remitted and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened: let him be anathema.

In the main, Roman Catholicism has adhered more rigidly to the dogma of personal immortality so far as clerical teaching is concerned than has been true of current Protestantism. The voice of the church, with the exception of a few modernists, has been unanimous in support of the orthodox doctrine of personal survival. Whether the bulk

of the laity has escaped the contagion of doubt upon the subject which has swept over the world during the last half century it is difficult to say. To a much larger degree than is true of the average Protestant, the devout Catholic entrusts his religious thinking to his ecclesiastical superiors. On this account, belief in the future life is probably more general on the part of the Roman Catholic masses than is true of Protestantism. This is not because the doctrinal standards of the latter diverge at this point from those of the older church, but simply because they have less practical weight in the thought life of their adherents.

The teaching of the Reformed churches is quite specific upon the question. In Martin Luther's Shorter Catechism, it is distinctly taught that the general judgment includes all human beings and that the righteous are to live forever in bliss and the wicked in eternal torment. The resurrection of the material body of Christ is directly asserted and is indicated as a type of our own resurrection. *The Heidelberg Catechism* says specifically in answer to the question, "What comfort does the resurrection of the body give you?"

That not only my soul, upon the leaving this life, shall be immediately carried up to heaven, to be united with Jesus Christ its Head, but that my body, being also raised again by the power of that Divine Redeemer, shall be reunited to my soul, and rendered conformable to the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the Heidelberg formula approximates more nearly to the Johannine conception of eternal life than is true of most other pronouncements of the period. In answer to the question, "And what consolation do you receive from the article of eternal life?" the catechism says,

That as at present I perceive in my heart a beginning of eternal glory, I shall likewise after this life enjoy that perfect happiness which the eye has not seen or ear heard, and which never entered into the heart of man to conceive, by praising God through all eternity.

*The Shorter Westminster Catechism* asserts the Augustinian eschatology practically without modification. Lightfoot in his interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles somewhat modifies the ordinary meaning of Article IV which deals with the resurrection of Christ but asserts that it clearly teaches a "belief in the continued life of the spirit, when, after the body dies, it returns to that invisible world by which the visible world which we inhabit is so mysteriously surrounded."

Hagenbach in his *History of Christian Doctrine* sums up the matter, we think very correctly, in the following words upon the eschatology of the Reformation period:

And, lastly, Protestants and Roman Catholics were in almost perfect accordance as to the doctrine of the last things (with the exception of the doctrine concerning purgatory). The minor sects also adopted, in the main, the same views respecting the second



advent of Christ to judge the world, and the resurrection of the body. As regards the state of the blessed and the lost, the opinions of the different denominations were modified in various ways by their respective creeds, but these differences were not introduced into the symbolical books.

The creedal confessions of orthodox Christendom remain of course today precisely what they were at the time of the Reformation. In actual practice, however, among the Protestant churches, the interpretations which the vast majority of both the clergy and the laity attach to these historic symbols diverge widely from those which were commonly accepted when the creeds were written. This changed point of view has largely come about as a result of the scientific progress of the last half century. The situation has been admirably outlined by Bishop Gore in his recent volume entitled *Belief in God*. In discussing "The Breakdown of Tradition" at the very beginning of the book, he refers to the prevailing note of the day with regard to the older standards of the church as one "of uncertainty and even bewilderment." This uncertainty and bewilderment apply especially to the problem of immortality. The reaction from the extreme Calvinistic view concerning the future life and especially future punishment is now in full swing. However we may account for the fact, no careful observer of the present religious situation can dispute the correctness of the above statement.

The extent to which Protestant views in the field of eschatology have really changed is admirably illustrated in the brief outline of the Reformed faith given as an introduction to *The Presbyterian Handbook for 1923*. Comparing the statements contained in this summary of present day Calvinism with the doctrine of Augustine and the Protestant theologians who imitated him so faithfully, one is conscious of the widest divergence. The rigid predestination of the older thinkers is softened down to the following comparatively innocuous declaration:

We believe that God, from the beginning, in His own good pleasure, gave to His Son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ, unto holiness, service, and salvation, we believe that all who come to years of discretion can receive this salvation only through faith and repentance; and we believe that all who die in infancy, and all others given by the Father to the Son who are beyond the reach of the outward means of grace are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how He pleases.

In the section entitled "Of the Resurrection and the Life to Come," we find this declaration:

We believe that in the life to come the spirits of the just, at death made free from sin, enjoy immediate communion with God and the vision of His glory; and we confidently look for the general resurrection in the last day, when the bodies of those who sleep in Christ shall be fashioned in the likeness of the glorious body of their Lord, with whom they shall live and reign forever.

One cannot help wondering what Jonathan Edwards or even John Calvin himself would say concerning the section entitled "Of the Last Judgment." It runs as follows:

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again in glorious majesty to judge the world and to make a final separation between the righteous and the wicked. The wicked shall receive the eternal award of their sins, and the Lord will manifest the glory of His mercy in the salvation of His people and their entrance upon the full enjoyment of eternal life.

28 The three sections above quoted contain practically everything which has to do with the field of eschatology. It will be readily observed that we have traversed a great distance in these carefully guarded pronouncements from the stern and clear-cut interpretations of the centuries past. There is practically nothing said about hell, about the inherent immortality of the human spirit or about the resurrection of the material body. It is stated that there is to be a separation of the righteous from the wicked at the general judgment, but the status of the condemned is not definitely indicated.

What has taken place in the thought of the most theologically inclined of all Protestant communions has doubtless been true in greater or less degree of the others. We must now turn to consider more in detail the influences which have led to what Bishop Gore calls the "note of uncertainty and bewilderment" which characterizes so much of the present day thinking upon immortality.

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## CHAPTER VI

### MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND IMMORTALITY

MODERN philosophy begins with Descartes. The French thinker in his efforts to secure a solid basis for metaphysics postulated his famous "cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am) as the irreducible minimum of speculation. The Cartesian doctrine of the soul, at bottom, differed but little from St. Anselm's, and the ontological argument of the latter is really back of the French philosopher's viewpoint. Descartes believed in the soul as a simple substance, quite in harmony with the Mediaeval teaching. He was hard put to it to explain the interaction of soul and body, but it is only fair to say that his successors have not greatly improved upon the way in which he met the situation.

Spinoza, and to a certain extent Leibnitz, developed the modern theory of psycho-physical parallelism and attempted to get rid of Descartes' problem by the simple process of ignoring it. Spinoza in his doctrine of the one unitary Substance with its two parallel attributes of thought and extension, or, as we may express them, of body and mind, anticipated much that is found in recent



psychological discussion. Of course from the Spinozistic viewpoint, personal immortality is untenable. Reality pertains to Substance alone and consciousness in the individual, at death, simply merges into the all-inclusive Absolute.

Locke and the English Empirical school attacked the Cartesian doctrine of a soul substance with the utmost vigor. In dealing with the subject of identity and diversity, he argues that the idea of an immaterial substance is absurd. It has no function to discharge and the law of parsimony demands that it should be abandoned. William James, James Ward, F. H. Bradley, and many other modern psychologists in their arguments against the older theories of the soul do little more than repeat the considerations previously advanced by Locke. The final result of the Lockian criticism as it developed into the idealism of Berkeley and the skepticism of David Hume, is well known. Locke himself did not think that he was doing any damage to religion by getting rid of the immaterial soul. To quote his own language, "All the great ends of morality and religion are well enough secured, without philosophical proofs of the soul's immateriality." In the light of later developments, it may be questioned whether his confidence was justified.

Locke's Empiricism found its final culmination in the philosophical nihilism of Hume. The latter

philosopher disposes of the doctrine of immortality in his *Essays* in the most simple and complete fashion. His argument is worth quoting somewhat in detail because present day skepticism has not improved upon it:

Metaphysical topics suppose that the soul is immaterial, and that it is impossible for thought to belong to a material substance. But just metaphysics teach us, that the notion of substance is wholly confused and imperfect, and that we have no other idea of any substance, than as an aggregate of particular qualities inhering in an unknown something. Matter, therefore, and spirit, are at bottom equally unknown, and we cannot determine what qualities inhere in the one or in the other. . . . The most positive asserter of the mortality of the soul never denies the immortality of its substance, and that an immaterial substance, as well as a material, may lose its memory or consciousness, appears in part from experience, if the soul be immaterial. Reasoning from the common course of nature, and without supposing any new interposition of the Supreme Cause, which ought always to be excluded from philosophy, what is incorruptible must also be ingenerable. The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth, and if the former existence no ways concerned us, neither will the latter. Animals undoubtedly feel, think, love, hate, will and even reason, though in a more imperfect manner than men. Are their souls also immaterial and immortal?"

Having demolished the metaphysical arguments for immortality, Hume turns to the moral argument and shows that it is impossible to predicate the divine action upon the basis of human judgment. He says very cleverly that the justice of God is beyond our comprehension and that we have no right to draw any specific conclusions from it. To quote his own language, "It is very

safe for us to affirm, that whatever we know the Deity to have actually done is best, but it is very dangerous to affirm that He must always do what to us seems best." He is especially satirical in dealing with the question of future rewards and punishments. He says:

Heaven and hell suppose two distinct species of men, the good and the bad, but the greatest part of mankind float betwixt vice and virtue. Were one to go round the world with an intention of giving a good supper to the righteous and a sound drubbing to the wicked, he would frequently be embarrassed in his choice, and would find the merits and demerits of most men and women scarcely amount to the value of either.

It is in his reference to the physical arguments that the Scotch philosopher appears to make his best case. He contends that the analogy of nature is all against the survival of the soul after death. The last symptoms which we find present in the mind are those of disorder, weakness, insensibility, and stupidity, "the forerunners of its annihilation." Even sleep, he says, is attended with "temporary extinction" or at least "a great confusion in the soul." He continues:

Judging by the usual analogy of nature, no form can continue when transferred to a condition of life very different from the original one in which it was placed. Trees perish in the water, fishes in the air, animals in the earth. Even so small a difference as that of climate is often fatal. What reason then to imagine that an immense alteration, such as is made on the soul by the dissolution of its body, and all its organs of thought and sensation, can be effected without the dissolution of the whole? Everything

is in common between soul and body. The organs of the one are all of them the organs of the other, the existence, therefore, of the one must be dependent on the other. The souls of animals are allowed to be mortal, and they bear so near a resemblance to the souls of men, that the analogy from one to the other forms a very strong argument.

Hume is distressed by the problem presented in the innumerable multitude of beings who would have to be provided with eternal habitations if they were all immortal. Every planet in every solar system, he thinks, may be peopled with intelligent beings who would deserve immortality just as much as we do. This being true, it would require the constant construction of new universes in order to find accommodations for such a host. The problem is large enough even when regarded only from the point of view of our own earthly history.

When it is asked, whether Agamemnon, Thersites, Hannibal, Varro, and every stupid clown that ever existed in Italy, Scythia, Bactria, or Guinea, are now alive, can any man think, that a scrutiny of nature will furnish arguments strong enough to answer so strange a question in the affirmative?

Hume concludes, therefore, that the immortality of the soul cannot be demonstrated by the mere light of reason and that "it is the gospel, and the gospel alone that has brought life and immortality to light." In view of his general attitude toward religion, the last quotation appears to possess no slight degree of irony.



Kant, as the world knows, followed Hume. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the conclusions reached with regard to personal immortality are precisely those given in the paragraph above. Human reason, Kant agrees, is utterly incapable of demonstrating immortality. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, however, the German philosopher comes back strong in defense of the doctrines which he had disproved in his earlier volume. God, Freedom, and Immortality are all postulates of the practical reason and therefore must be accepted, although their truthfulness cannot be theoretically demonstrated. With regard to immortality, Kant says that it is necessarily demanded by the moral order of the universe and that ethics is impossible without it. In the present world, justice is not always done, but in a moral universe justice must always triumph. Therefore there must be another world in order to preserve the moral order. Of course, Kant does not pretend to prove that the universe is moral. He assumes this and assuming it produces his argument for survival. Granted the necessary presupposition and Kant's position will always have great weight. With a type of mind which is inclined toward pessimism, it will have no more value than the theoretical proofs so elaborately demolished in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The post-Kantian philosophers, Fichte, Schel-



ling, and Hegel in the main tended in the direction of a Pantheistic absorption of the individual soul in the Absolute. It is somewhat difficult to say just what their views with regard to individual immortality were in most cases but the tendency was in the direction indicated. Even Schleiermacher appears to have been doubtful about individual immortality. The left wing Hegelians plunged completely into the abyss of Atheism or at the best into a materialistic Pantheism which found no place for the existence of the soul, to say nothing of its survival after death. On the other hand, the English and Scotch neo-Hegelians such as Thomas Hill Green, the Cairds, the Seths, Wallace, and others of the same school carefully guarded the doctrine of immortality along with their belief in the Hegelian Absolute. James Seth in the concluding section of his *Ethical Principles* draws a clear line of demarcation between his own position and what may be styled the typical Hegelian conclusion with regard to immortality. His brother, A. Seth (Pringle-Pattison) in his two series of Gifford lectures has brilliantly presented the same point of view. Professor Josiah Royce has also argued for personal immortality upon a neo-Hegelian basis. Sir Henry Jones in his late Gifford series entitled *A Faith That Enquires* reaches similar conclusions. It appears only fair to say that the neo-Hegelian school as a whole has

stood out more thoroughly in defense of personal immortality than any other movement in the field of philosophy during the last century.

Co-extensive with the rise of the doctrine of evolution came the development of Agnosticism as an attempted solution of the problems of the universe. Mr. Herbert Spencer, who may be regarded as the apostle of the school, relegated Kant's postulates of the practical reason to the Unknowable and refused to discuss them further. The prevailing attitude of Agnosticism toward the future life is seen at its best in the epitaph of Thomas H. Huxley written by his wife.

Be not afraid, ye waiting souls that weep;  
For still He giveth His beloved sleep,  
And if an endless sleep He wills, so best.

One line of development from Kant which has exerted more influence over present day thinking than is usually supposed is that of the pessimistic idealism of Schopenhauer and his disciples. Starting with the Absolute as unconscious will or mere blind striving, Schopenhauer developed an amazingly clever interpretation of reality. From his point of view, personal immortality is a delusion and a sham, the desire for it originating in the presence of the unconscious Will to live in us which of course will go on in other forms of existence after our personalities have disappeared. Von Hartmann, in his *Philosophy of the Uncon-*

*scious*, has carried Schopenhauer's position farther and has singularly anticipated much present day discussion. The influence of the pessimists upon present day thought has been accentuated by its brilliant presentation in the novels of Thomas Hardy and other well-known writers of modern prose and poetry. Quite a good deal of the present uncertainty with regard to a future life arises, consciously or unconsciously, from the subtle influence of Schopenhauer and his followers.

One of the significant forces in modern thought, especially in its influence upon organized Christianity, is the philosophy of Positivism as taught by August Comte and his followers. Positivism rules out any possible immortality for the individual, finding its satisfaction in the immortality of the race. Idealized humanity living under perfect social surroundings and with ever increasing material comforts is the goal of the positive philosophy. As a distinct religious movement, Positivism failed completely but it may be questioned whether it has not achieved pronounced success in its inroads upon orthodox Christianity. The number of ministers and church leaders generally who are really Positivists in their thinking at the present time is much larger than most people suppose. Comte failed to conquer the church from the outside, but it remains to be seen whether he will succeed in his attack from within. Much of the popularity of Positivism, as was true in the case

of pessimism, arises from its artistic presentation. For example, the doctrine of racial immortality sounds tremendously appealing in a poem like George Eliot's *The Choir Invisible*:

O may I join the choir invisible  
 Of those immortal dead who live again  
 In minds made better by their presence; live  
 In pulses stirred to generosity;  
 In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn  
 Of miserable aims that end with self;  
 In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,  
 And with their mild persistence urge men's minds  
 To vaster issues.

Notwithstanding the high altruism of such an appeal, the fact remains that there is a pessimistic coloring about it which makes it ineffective as a motive force with the large majority of human beings.

The latest movement in contemporary philosophy, the New Realism, is on the whole unsympathetic with the idea of personal immortality. Starting from a more or less materialistic basis, the New Realist achieves negative or at best doubtful conclusions with regard to the perdurability of the human personality. Mr. Bertrand Russell, for example, finds little solace in the positivistic viewpoint of George Eliot since the race which absorbs all individual values must itself come to an end at some period, and thus destroy everything that human beings with so much self-sacrifice have

accumulated, and yet he has no faith in the doctrine of individual immortality. Perhaps the best statement of the realistic attitude is given by Professor Alexander in his Gifford lectures entitled *Space, Time and Deity*. In the concluding chapter of this series, "Deity and Value," he says:

The mere desire that we feel to be present ourselves and continue our work begun here, admirable as it is, because the passion to do things ourselves is at the root of all our endeavours, cannot overrule the facts of our apparent limitation to the time and place of our bodily life. The data do not allow us to suppose, so far as we have seen, that our minds, even if we believe that they only use the body as an instrument, do exist without the instrument, and we are certainly not entitled because of our desire of a continued existence (possessed by different persons in very different degrees of strength, and by some not at all) to influence our metaphysics of mind, so as to support a thesis which would lend itself to that wish. For that wish of continued existence may be replaced, and perhaps with greater humanity, by resigning our work to others, as we are accustomed to do here, when the occasion demands.

The present current in philosophical thinking, so far as the New Realism is concerned, seems therefore in the direction of a rather negative attitude toward personal survival after death. While this is true, it should also be remembered that there are quite a number of realistic or semi-realistic pluralists like James Ward and F. C. S. Schiller who believe thoroughly in the doctrine of personal immortality.



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## CHAPTER VII

### MODERN SCIENCE AND IMMORTALITY

IF modern philosophy begins with Descartes, it is usually affirmed that modern science begins with Francis Bacon. Beyond any question, the great Englishman with his emphasis upon induction and experiment laid the foundations of later scientific progress, and yet many years elapsed before Bacon's vision passed into realization. It was not until the early part of the nineteenth century that our modern scientific age really began. It would be tedious to recapitulate the history of the different sciences during the past century nor is such a process necessary to our purpose. What we are concerned with here is to indicate the bearing of the enormous accumulation of scientific material during this period upon the problem of personal immortality. There can be no doubt that science has had much to do with regard to the popular view of the subject. Perhaps the majority of people who disbelieve in immortality today assume such an attitude because of what they believe to be scientific evidence. The best illustration of this fact is found in the data concerning the attitude of present day men of science toward the question under

discussion, published in Professor James H. Leuba's *The Belief in God and Immortality*. Professor Leuba finds that out of a selected number of scientists, 50.7% of the physicists believed in immortality and only 37% of the biologists. Of the historians, 51.5% believed in a future life and 55.3% of the sociologists. In the field of psychology, the results were practically negative, only 19.8% believing in a future life. Of course, Dr. Leuba's figures are not at all conclusive because of the circumstances attending the induction, and yet they may be regarded as possessing considerable value. Beyond any question, they indicate a decidedly negative attitude on the part of many present day scientists concerning the subject of immortality.

Francis Bacon himself was thoroughly orthodox in his religious views and appears to have entertained no doubt of personal existence after death. In this respect, his example was followed by the most eminent of his successors during the next two centuries. Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Buffon, and the most outstanding names in the early history of modern science were believers in the Christian doctrine of immortality. The beginning of widespread doubt with regard to the accepted dogmas of religion on the part of scientific investigators came with the rapid development of the biological and physical sciences in the first half of

the nineteenth century. The doctrine of evolution especially led to widespread hostility to the orthodox view. It is doubtless true that a good deal of this opposition arose from the mistaken and intemperate attitude of certain ecclesiastical leaders toward the new scientific discoveries when the latter were first made known to the world. The position of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer with regard to Christianity in general was not made more cordial by the attacks of the clergy upon what these thinkers considered indisputable scientific data. Of course this attitude changed after a time, but in many cases the damage done was irreparable. The present day schism between science and religion indicated by the statistics of Professor Leuba and others arose in no slight degree from the prejudiced hostility of the church toward science during the last century and in the deep seated resentment of scientists arising from the fact.

There is a certain sense in which it may be said that the publication of the *Origin of Species* instituted a new era in the history of knowledge. From the time of Bacon down to that of Darwin we mark a rather definite period in the development of scientific investigation. In this period, the idea of induction or of experiment generally dominated the thought of the world. Beginning with Darwin, a new Idea, as Hegel would put it,

came to light and asserted precedence over all others. This Idea was the conception of development. It is not too much to say that the principle of evolution has outshadowed all other considerations in scientific circles during the past half century. It has entered every department of knowledge: biology, astronomy, sociology, psychology, and even philosophy and theology. There can be little question but that the principle has been over-emphasized as a result of what may be styled its extreme fashionableness, but no one will dispute the important part that it has played in the history of scientific progress. It is difficult to find a scientific authority of the present day who does not give the theory a large place in his thinking. If the early founders of the evolutionary school could return to us, they would doubtless feel abundantly satisfied with the results which their teachings have achieved.

From the beginning, the leading protagonists of the new dogma of evolution were skeptically inclined concerning the doctrine of immortality. Mr. Darwin himself was a devout Christian when he began his scientific investigations. At the close of his life, he assumed a thoroughly agnostic attitude toward the major problems of religion including immortality. He has borne eloquent testimony to the slow and almost imperceptible stages which marked the transition from his period of belief to



the period of doubt. The determining factor in the entire process was of course his conviction that scientific evolution cut the ground away from the current orthodox theology. Like Huxley, he was not disposed to assert any positive belief in the extinction of personality at the time of death, but one infers from his writings that he regarded such a result as highly probable. In any event, he did not consider the evidence in favor of survival as adequate or convincing. Mr. Darwin's attitude told heavily against Christianity with the generation which followed him. His outstanding reputation as a scientist, his frank and tolerant attitude toward all disputed questions, the religious background of his earlier years, and his obvious desire to adhere to the old forms and teachings as far as possible could not but influence his disciples profoundly. Huxley's opposition to the church hardly carried so much weight with it because there was about it a touch of the forensic, but there was nothing of this kind ever associated with the name of Darwin. It is true that a number of brilliant evolutionists, perhaps the two most brilliant after Darwin and Huxley, that is to say Wallace and Romanes, adhered sooner or later to the Christian viewpoint. Romanes began by going much farther than Darwin toward the atheistical position, but closed his career a devout son of the church. Wallace reached definitely spiritistic conclusions with regard to the nature of man and

accepted in thoroughgoing fashion the dogma of personal immortality.

Other leading evolutionists went much farther than Darwin or Huxley in their denial of orthodox Christian doctrines. Ernest Haeckel, for example, developed a philosophy of materialistic monism which entirely eliminated all three of the Kantian postulates of religion—God, Freedom, and Immortality. Haeckel in his *History of Creation* endeavored to outshine the Book of Genesis and had no hesitancy about claiming success for his accomplishment. The tendency among scientists at this time was clearly in the direction of a thoroughgoing materialism. In psychology, the psychophysical parallelistic theory held general sway, but was obviously regarded as only a prelude in most cases to an agnostic metaphysic. There were of course some spiritualists but the majority were either agnostics or materialistic monists.

A typical representative of the modern materialistic attitude may be found in Professor Wilhelm Ostwald of the University of Leipzig who gave the Ingersoll lecture on *Individuality and Immortality* in 1906. In this interesting and fascinatingly written document, the author in kindly but none the less definite fashion does away completely with the old idea of personal immortality. There is nothing in the scientific world, as he sees it, which even hints at the idea of personal survival. All that

remains in nature is the inheritance preserved in the life of the species, and this is all which Ostwald thinks we ought to expect in the case of human beings. Moreover, he does not consider immortality desirable. The author's personal confession is interesting not only because it is typical of so much of modern scientific thinking, but also because of the distinctly human touch which it possesses:

Considered from this standpoint (the apparent necessity for the feebleness of old age) death is not only not an evil, but it is a necessary factor in the existence of the race. And looking into my own mind with all the frankness and scientific objectiveness which I can apply to the most personal question, I find no horror connected with the idea of my own death. Of course it is objectionable to suffer illness or pain, and there are beside still many things which I should like to do or to experience before I die, but this would be a loss to me only if I were afterward conscious of it and could regret it, and such possibilities seem to be out of the question. As to my friends and relations, they will feel my loss the less, the older I become. After I have lived out the span of my life, the bodily ending will seem a perfectly natural thing, and it will be more a feeling of relief than one of sorrow that will come in watching the end.

One must go back to Epicurus with his meditation upon the beneficence of death to find an adequate parallel to these words. In fact, there is much about the attitude of modern scientific materialism which reminds one of the pagan culture of the Graeco-Roman period. It is not without significance that so keenly responsive a nature as that of Walter Pater should have found in the

older Epicurean culture the most stimulating response to the promptings of his own age. It is interesting in this connection to note that Ostwald regards the Kantian view that immortality is necessary for the preservation of the moral order with complete and almost disdainful skepticism. "To frighten people into ethical action by threatening them with eternal punishment is a poor and inefficacious way of influencing them," he says. The only way to real advancement in the ethical world is by the development of habits which will enable us to act spontaneously in unselfish ways and for the good of humanity as a whole. Morality does not need a future life and is indeed better off without it.

Professor William James is perhaps more typical of the English and American group of scientists than Professor Ostwald. James throughout his career preserved an open mind toward the question of immortality. In his psychology, he fought manfully to secure a foothold for the freedom of the will and in his Ingersoll lecture for 1897-98 he put up a battle for at least the will to believe in a future life. His long and continued interest in the problems of psychical research is familiar to everyone. He has been quoted by both materialists and spiritualists as a supporter of their respective doctrines, but the truth seems to be that he was never quite able to reach a definite

conclusion with regard to the great questions at issue. He was not an agnostic, for he believed that the problems were not incapable of solution in the nature of the case, but simply that they have thus far not been solved. He kept an open mind with regard to all of them, and apparently passed into the unknown without being quite sure just what to expect but entirely unafraid and without any spirit of pessimism disturbing his soul.

There is a tendency at the present time to regard the doctrine of evolution as distinctly helpful to a rational view of immortality. We shall discuss this point of view in a chapter especially devoted to it a little later. The current would seem to be running more directly toward this attitude during recent years. On the whole, however, the modern scientific movement can scarcely be said to have contributed toward the encouragement of the Christian doctrine of immortality. Nevertheless there are many indications that science will yet become an efficient factor in fostering a living faith in a future existence.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PROOFS FROM PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

ONE phase of scientific development has unquestionably furnished a new interest in the subject of immortality. We refer to the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research concerning which there has been so much discussion during recent years. An organization which has included in its membership men like Henry Sidgwick, William James, A. J. Balfour, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, F. W. H. Myers, and many others scarcely less eminent, assuredly demands some respect on the part of those who are not hopelessly prejudiced in favor of a particular hypothesis. While this is correct, it must be confessed that the results obtained by the psychical researchers appear to be singularly inconclusive concerning the problems raised in their discussions. It is true that some men like Professor Hyslop, F. W. H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, Arthur Conan Doyle, and others have become thoroughly convinced of the spiritistic hypothesis. The arguments which have converted these thinkers unfortunately seem singularly unconvincing to many other minds.

Since the Great War the public has been deluged with spiritualistic literature purporting to furnish evidence of communications "from the other side." Perhaps the most notable of these volumes is the *Raymond* of Sir Oliver Lodge. This book has received wide circulation and has been read with sympathetic interest by many people who cannot accept its conclusions. It purports to contain messages from the author's son who was killed in France during the war, together with certain comments and conclusions concerning the life to come on the part of Sir Oliver himself. The thoroughgoing manner in which the author accepts the validity of his hypothesis concerning the life beyond is apparent throughout the book. Take, for example, words like these:

I am convinced of continued existence on the other side of death as I am of existence here. It may be said, you cannot be as sure as you are of sensory experience. I say I can. A physicist is never limited to direct sensory impressions, he has to deal with a multitude of conceptions and things, for which he has no physical organ, the dynamical theory of heat, for instance, and of gases, the theories of electricity, of magnetism, of chemical affinity, of cohesion, aye, and his apprehension of the ether itself, lead him into regions where sight and hearing and touch are impotent as direct witnesses, where they are no longer efficient guides. In such regions everything has to be interpreted in terms of the insensible, the apparently unsubstantial, and in a definite sense, the imaginary.

In other words, the hypothetical data of the sciences in their search for the explanation of physical phenomena appear so unsubstantial and so imaginary that the communications of spiritistic

mediums are not incredible. The various doctrines held by orthodox scientists concerning the structure of atoms, electrons, and the ether seem to Sir Oliver to be quite as unsubstantial as the spirit of Raymond. Paradoxical as it may appear, it is frequently true that the most thoroughgoing scientific investigators are at least as credulous as are the theologians themselves.

Frederic W. H. Myers in his two bulky volumes entitled *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* has doubtless made out the best case for the psychical research movement. Mr. Myers has brought together such an enormous mass of material that it appears overwhelming from the standpoint of the number of witnesses. The evidence was apparently conclusive to the author of the book himself and produced definite conviction concerning the reality of personal survival. It has doubtless had the same effect upon a certain proportion of its readers whose minds were especially open to the reception of this kind of testimony. On the other hand, even the most devoted admirers of Mr. Myers, and the writer confesses himself to be one, will scarcely claim that his work has had any very pronounced influence in convincing the bulk of people that the soul survives bodily dissolution. For a long time, Professor J. H. Hyslop believed that if he could secure an appropriation of a million dollars from Con-

gress he could demonstrate upon the basis of scientific evidence and beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt that the human spirit is immortal. The members of Congress remained unconvinced despite the vast issues at stake and refused to make the appropriation. No doubt most of them believed that the money could only be applied toward gathering a bulk of testimony resembling the material collected by Mr. Myers and possessing no more evidential value. Under the circumstances they doubtless regarded themselves as justified in confining their appropriations to the purely material field.

Outside of the members of the American and English Societies for Psychical Research, scientists as a rule have rigidly tabooed the spiritualistic theory. Professor Münsterberg said before his death that the evidential facts alleged by psychical research not only do not exist, but can never exist. Professor A. E. Taylor of the British Academy asserts that the solution of the mediumistic phenomena must either be fraud or telepathy or, if these theories break down, possible demoniacal possession. Professor Leuba in *The Belief in God and Immortality* devotes several pages to proving the fraudulent character of the spiritualistic phenomena. He refers especially to the complete exposé of Eusapia Palladino at Columbia University in 1910. He also criticises rather freely the

proofs of survival through what is called "cross-correspondence." His solution appears to be that telepathy is quite as satisfactory an explanation of the facts as is needed. One gathers from his general position, however, that the telepathic hypothesis is scarcely more agreeable to him than the existence of spirits. The fact is that from a scientific point of view telepathy is hardly more credible than straight out spiritualism. Doctor Leuba justly criticises the unsatisfactory character of the future life as brought out in the mediumistic reports. He says:

Whether the results of the S. P. R. are regarded as proving survival or not, it must be admitted that no amount of ingenuity in explanation and no optimism can hide the unattractiveness of the glimpses that may have been caught of the other life: there is no hint in these glimpses of any glorification, nor, for that matter, of any retribution. That other world would come much closer to a realization of the primary than of the modern conception of continuation. The disincarnate souls appear on the whole as enfeebled and inefficient replicas of earthly beings. This is not the kind of continuation which the modern world desires; it lacks the essential features of the Christian conception of immortality.

The great objection to the whole spiritualistic program so far as evidence of survival is concerned appears to lie precisely at the point where Professor Leuba has criticised it. As some one has said, if we are all to become driveling idiots as soon as we cross the border into eternity, the prospect is so unappealing that we naturally hesitate about believing that such a catastrophe can



be true. If William James, for example, talked as badly during his lifetime as the mediums have made him talk since his death, he would never have achieved his reputation as a master of English thought and style. It is impossible to point to a single significant contribution concerning the nature of the future life which has been obtained by spiritistic means. What information might otherwise appear significant is of such contradictory character that it loses its value. The spirits who furnish "news" concerning the life beyond do not agree as to the character of that life and their statements are so vague and at times so childish as to become little short of disgusting. Of course efforts have been made to account for this situation, since the days of Myers, by the assumption that the spirits themselves are not at their best when they are communicating with earthly beings and that the difficulties of "getting across" are such that only the most confused and garbled reports can be secured. This explanation seems inadequate to many minds. The conversations which men like James, Hodgson and others are reported to have carried on through spiritualistic mediums are so unlike what their friends would normally anticipate that they can scarcely be regarded as garbled representations of a genuine original. One can hardly see how the material attributed to some of these men could ever have possessed the remotest connection with their think-

ing. Had the communications from the other side been of such a character as to harmonize with the earthly personalities of those from whom they have purported to come, it would make a strong argument for the spiritistic hypothesis. Unfortunately for the theory, however, the argument in the main appears to be negative.

Of course some of the phenomena cited by Myers, Hyslop and others appear difficult to explain on any naturalistic hypothesis. Mr. Randall in his recent work on the significance of psychical research entitled *The New Light on Immortality* concedes that all the phenomena so far known may eventually be explained "on some theory of telepathy or mind reading, or through the activity of psychic powers in man whose nature or operations are not yet understood. On this theory all these phenomena, even the most mysterious and baffling at present, would ultimately be reduced to purely psychic phenomena with which discarnate intelligences have nothing whatever to do." Mr. Randall himself does not accept this interpretation, being inclined to the spiritualistic hypothesis accepted by Myers and Hyslop. Nevertheless, he concedes that the case is still doubtful, at least from the standpoint of many intelligent people. He believes that future investigation will definitely turn the balance in favor of spiritism, but acknowl-

edges that his views in this respect are matters of faith rather than demonstration.

More than a quarter of a century ago Mr. Thomas Jay Hudson attacked the reality of spirit communications and claimed that all psychic phenomena of the spiritistic type could be explained on the basis of telepathy. It is interesting to note his conclusion as presented in his book entitled *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life* written in 1895. He says:

My proposition is that psychic phenomena properly interpreted, including that which they attribute to disembodied spirits, furnish indubitable evidence of a future life, and that the only interpretation which science can give to such phenomena is that they emanate from the living psychic, and never from disembodied spirits.

It would be easy to cite multitudinous cases of extraordinary and bizarre circumstances from the volumes of Myers, Hyslop, Barrett, Flammarion, and many others, which tend to prove the reality of spiritistic phenomena. These data, however, do not make out a clear case for survival, as we have already seen, and our space limitations are such that it appears unnecessary to quote them. After reading the documentary evidence with sympathetic interest, the writer at least is inclined to say with William James:

I have been tempted at times to believe that the Creator has eternally intended this department of nature to remain baffling, to prompt our curiosities and hopes and suspicions all in equal measure, so that, although ghosts and clairvoyances, and raps and mes-

sages from spirits are always seeming to exist and can never be fully explained away, they also seem never to be susceptible of full corroboration.

On the whole, it would seem that a certain contribution toward the solution of the problem of immortality from a scientific standpoint has been made by the students of psychic phenomena. Nevertheless with a few exceptions the most ardent of these students will scarcely claim that they have solved the problem. Perhaps, as James surmised, it will take centuries to reach a solution on the basis of psychic investigation. In any event, up to the present time the matter remains one of faith rather than one of scientific demonstration.

The Psychical Researchers, we are inclined to believe, have helped to sustain faith in the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are so many points in common between the spiritistic phenomena collected by Myers and Hyslop and the Scripture record of the Appearances during the Forty Days that the interest aroused in the one group has led to renewed interest in the other. However we may explain the later evidence, it certainly tends to make the earlier more intelligible to the modern mind. As the writer sees the matter, this is the most important contribution which psychic research has made to Christianity. Not a few people whose faith in the Resurrection had become dim have had it strengthened and renewed

by reading the evidence furnished in the ponderous volumes of the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THEOSOPHY AND THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA

NO study of the future life would be in any sense complete without some reference to the so-called doctrine of Karma and to theories of metempsychosis in general. We have already referred to the views of transmigration and pre-existence held by the Greek philosophers and by certain of the early Christian theologians. These views have come down from very ancient sources and are still held by perhaps a majority of the human family. The origin of the idea appears to be quite simple. Certain family resemblances suggested to the primitive mind the idea that a child was the incarnation of its father or of some one of its ancestors. Moreover, in the early stages of development the savage mind was quick to detect fancied resemblances to animals on the part of children, and was prone to account for such resemblances on the basis of transmigration. Tylor, Frazer, and others have called attention to instances of this kind. The totemistic theory is closely related to the same point of view. The idea of the totem was that of a mystical blood brotherhood with some animal which was looked upon as

the ancestor of the clan and as a guardian spirit in times of trial and of need. According to the totem theory when a member of the tribe died, his spirit was supposed to go back to the clan totem and to assume its appearance and shape as an animal. The transition from such a view to the ordinary doctrine of metempsychosis is quite easy. In any event, from whatever source or sources the transmigration theory may have come, nothing is more certain than the fact that we find it present in the oldest traces of religion and of civilization which have come down to us.

The doctrine of transmigration found place in the religions of the East and has held uninterrupted sway over most of them since the time of the origin of Buddhism, about 600 B. C. As Dr. Cave and others have shown, the teaching is not found in the old Vedic religions which preceded the later Indian cults. From the older point of view, the soul passed after death to a somewhat crudely fashioned heaven or hell quite in line with later Western views. The present day doctrine of the future was introduced into the Hindu religions through the Upanishads. It is here that we find the first expression of Karma, an Oriental word which means "work" or "deed" and which expresses the idea that a man must continually reap that which he sows. Every action carries with it its own penalty and there is no possibility of separating the two. No more rigid doctrine of

retribution is conceivable, and no more complete embodiment of what is sometimes called "the law of the harvest" has ever been fashioned by the human mind. Every man, from the standpoint of Karma, becomes his own judge and passes sentence upon his own life. Moreover, the place where the sentence is carried out is not in some shadowy other world, but in this same human life where the original deed was committed. The only difference is that the expiation is carried on through successive reincarnations which afford ample time and opportunity for complete retribution. In these various stages through which the spirit passes, it is not immediately conscious of its previous existence, but nevertheless the character which it possesses has come down unimpaired from the earlier level of life. The Buddhist teaching elaborates this law in minute detail. Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* gives numerous illustrations of the detailed manner in which the interpreters of Karma explain the operation of the law:

The stealer of food shall be dyspeptic, the scandal monger shall have foul breath, the horse stealer shall go lame. Stealers of grain and meats shall turn into rats and vultures, the thief who took dyed garments or perfumes shall become a red partridge or a muskrat. . . . . When good King Bunsari's feet were burned and rubbed with salt by command of his cruel son, that he might not walk, why was the torture inflicted on a man so holy? Because in a previous birth he had walked near a dagoba with his slippers on, and had trodden on priest's carpet without washing his feet.

Of course the doctrine of Karma has held its sway primarily because it appears to present some moral justification for the apparent inequalities of human experience. The never-ending question concerning the sufferings of the righteous and of the innocent is answered by saying that they were not righteous or innocent in some earlier existence and are now only atoning for their misdeeds of the past. At the time when the Titanic crashed into an iceberg in the mid-Atlantic and caused the loss of many hundreds of lives, the modern Theosophists explained the sufferings of those who went down with the vessel or who perished by cold and exhaustion in the ocean on the basis of the law of Karma. The writer distinctly remembers a lecturer who belonged to the movement above mentioned elaborating in detail the explanation that however innocent the numerous victims of the disaster might appear to us, their fate proved that in some previous existence they must have been guilty of some sin or sins which had to be expiated in relentless fashion in the present life. The explanation appealed to many of his hearers even in a typical western audience.

The supreme objection to the whole theory of Karma, as Professor Pringle-Pattison has clearly shown, consists in the fact that it does not satisfy the demands of justice. The retribution which it furnishes is after all only formal or imaginary.

Unless there is memory of the previous existences in one definite self-consciousness which binds them together there is no possible morality involved in the process of transmigration. The Karma which is carried over from one life to another retains no identity if memory or self-consciousness is destroyed. On this basis, it has as little meaning or value as the old soul substance which David Hume so mercilessly ridicules in his essays. There is no possible justice or morality involved in B experiencing a Karma carried over from a previous existence, which we may designate as A, unless B knows this previous existence as his own and the Karma as properly belonging to him. It is of the essence of the doctrine of Karma, however, that no such consciousness is possible. It is the unconscious Karma which gives point to the theory. At the same time it is this unconscious feature which totally destroys its moral significance. A parallel in actual life would be the punishment of an individual for some offense committed during or before a total amnesia. Whatever the crime might have been, it would mean nothing to the person out of whose memory it had passed entirely and he could only think of himself as punished for something which had no connection with his character. Modern conceptions of justice would not approve a penalty of this kind if the facts were clearly established.



The theory of metempsychosis has always possessed attraction for a certain type of mind and some modern authors have tried to rehabilitate it during recent years. One naturally thinks of William Wordsworth, of Cardinal Newman, and of other nineteenth century poets. In the realm of philosophy, one of its foremost advocates has been Mr. F. C. S. Schiller who in his *Riddles of the Sphinx* has worked out a metaphysical solution of reality which carries with it the idea of the constantly recurring incarnations of a plurality of spirits whose interactions have produced the universe as we know it. Mr. Schiller defends the idea of pre-existence with rare dialectical skill but his arguments remain unconvincing to most of us. The old Socratic or Platonic proofs have been destroyed by modern psychologists and there appears to be no valid foundation for constructing a new argument. The whole theory is purely speculative and depends for its popularity upon a surface conception of retribution. When we go beneath the surface, as has been indicated, the moral appeal of the doctrine is entirely lost. The sort of justice which punishes one individual for the misdeeds of another, and this is what the system comes to when it is reduced to essential facts, makes no appeal to the modern conscience. Such retribution is not in reality retribution at all. It is not the doctrine, as has sometimes been said,

that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, but rather what one man sows another man shall surely reap. The fact that the latter statement contains an element of truth does not affect its significance as a moral proposition. Children do undoubtedly suffer for the sins of their parents, but it cannot be said that there is any special moral significance attached to the process.

Notwithstanding the essential non-morality, from the higher point of view, of the doctrine of Karma, we find it asserted in the writings of not a few present day thinkers. The Theosophical Society has popularized the theory and has introduced it to many Christians. Mrs. Anne Besant, for example, defines Karma as "the law of action and reaction." She is quite enthusiastic in her statement of the moral value of the doctrine. To her it is a true gospel, since it "makes an end of despair, encourages effort, cheers with the proclamation of final success, and insures the permanence of every fragment of good in us." She continues further:

Its value as an explanation of life is untold. The criminal, the lowest and vilest, the poorest, foulest specimen of our race, is only a baby soul, coming into a savage body, and thrown into a civilization for which he is unfit if left to follow his own instincts. . . . The knowledge of reincarnation shows us how the social instincts have evolved, why self sacrifice is the law of evolution for man, how we may plan out our own future evolution under natural laws. It teaches us that qualities evolved from earthly experience are

returned to earth for the service of man, and how every effort brings its full result under unerring law. . . .

Karma is a Law of Nature, it compels the ignorant, but it gives freedom to the wise. The three subsidiary expressions of it that bear most on our destiny are, "Thought builds character"; "Desire attracts its object and creates opportunity for grasping it"; "Action causes a favorable or unfavorable environment according as it has brought happiness or unhappiness to others."

Mrs. Besant stresses the idea that Karma is simply a natural law which, like other natural laws, has no moral quality in itself, but can be used either for good or for evil in accordance with the judgments and purpose of individuals. This idea is at variance with the usual interpretation of the doctrine which makes it the incarnation of justice and a definite embodiment of the moral order of the universe. The advocates of Karma do not manifest any great consistency in the logic which they use to reach their conclusions. Some of them, in fact, contradict directly the statements of others. Professor Pringle-Pattison has called attention to the fact that Alger in his *History of the Doctrine of a Future Life* argues for the reincarnation position on the ground that every suffering we endure is the consequence of the deeds of others, and not of our own faults, and on this account parallels the idea with that of the Christian doctrine of the atonement. This is of course the exact opposite of the ordinary interpretation of Karma which embodies the idea that every soul suffers precisely, as Miss Dougall says, "accord-

ing to its sins and no one suffers for the sins of another." We thus have Karma advocated as a purely individual law and also as a principle of atonement for others; as the universal moral law of the world and as a natural law which is essentially non-moral. Amid contradictions such as these it is difficult to see how the doctrine can make any serious appeal to present day thought levels. Miss Lily Dougall in her essay on *Reincarnation, Karma, and Theosophy* discusses the problem of Karma in detail and reaches the following conclusion:

The law of Karma candidly considered offends the instinct of justice in any healthy mind that believes in God. The fact that Christian thinkers have often taught as crude and cruel a doctrine of the Divine government of the world does not make the law of Karma, as expounded by Theosophy more just. It portrays horrible injustice on the part of a Divine Power, who binds fallible men upon the wheel of time and offers them no excuse but by toil-some effort and the fire of suffering, while He Himself holds aloof both from effort and suffering.

On the whole, the teaching of Karma and the Theosophical position generally appear to be a reversal rather than an advance in one's thinking concerning the future life. Doubtless they embody a primitive effort to solve the problem of evil and as such deserve a certain degree of respectful consideration. The advance in scientific knowledge, however, has made such solutions incredible, and as Miss Dougall has said, there is no particular reason for a healthy minded person to regret the

outcome. The doctrine of Karma is after all only a feature of that fundamental pessimism which characterizes the typically Oriental view of the universe.

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## CHAPTER X

### EVOLUTION AND IMMORTALITY

WE have already referred to the influence of the theory of organic evolution upon the belief in immortality. Considered as a whole, there can be little doubt but that this influence has tended toward disbelief or, in any event, toward doubt rather than toward belief in conscious survival after death. Certainly this was true in the cases of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Clifford, Haeckel and numerous other scientists of the period. Beginning with John Fiske and Henry Drummond, however, there has grown up a school of evolutionary thought which finds definite promise of personal immortality in the nature and history of organic evolution. A considerable number of recent writers have advocated this theory and it appears to be definitely gaining ground. Professor Pringle-Pattison, Professor James Y. Simpson, and other representatives of the Scottish school of thought have been especially enthusiastic over the idea. An excellent illustration of the position taken by these men may also be found in the essay entitled "The Mind and the Brain" by Doctor J. A. Hadfield published in Canon Streeter's well-known volume on *Immortality*.

Doctor Hadfield in the essay above mentioned reviews the different theories of the relation of mind and body now prevalent and proclaims his definite adherence to the thoroughgoing evolution of mind. It may be worth while to quote the conclusion which he reaches in his own language :

We may now summarize the stages of the evolution of the mind. There are, of course, countless other intermediate stages but it is sufficient for us to have mentioned the most important,—

(1) In the first stage, that illustrated in the amoeba, we have as yet no conclusive proof of the presence of a mind, except perhaps in the sense of a pervading mind, passive and impersonal, a part of the cosmic mind working in and through the primitive creature.

(2) In the second stage, we have the animals which possess a nervous system, whose actions are controlled by the flow of nerve energy or neurokyme.

(3) In the third stage, we have those animals in which incoming sensations have developed a centre for sensations, the central nervous system, where nerve energy is stored, and from which it is discharged by regularly constituted channels, and in response to specially strong stimuli.

(4) In the final stage, sensations are raised to a high pitch of intensity and in some unknown way produce a psychic form of energy we call consciousness. In this stage, also, the organism not only has a store of nerve energy, but possesses the power of directing that energy at will into any channel which leads to the fulfillment of its conscious purposes. . . .

The body thus appears to have produced what it can no longer control, nor even understand; and evolution has brought forth the flower and glory of its age-long development.

Doctor Hadfield does not claim that science has demonstrated immortality or that the theory of evolution necessarily leads to the conclusion which

he indicates. He is concerned, much after the manner of William James, simply with showing that science does not make it impossible for one to believe in immortality and in fact leads to the belief that such a conclusion is probable. The whole process of evolution is a pathway upward and it would seem that the next step is the survival of the spirit after death. Of course until more evidence is forthcoming no scientist would affirm that this situation actually obtains as a proved fact, but he is at perfect liberty to affirm that the trend of the scientific data which he possesses leads in the direction of immortality and gives strong ground for believing that at some time definite proof will be secured to substantiate such an hypothesis. To use his own words, "For the present, therefore, so far as science is concerned, life after the grave is not a proved fact, but the evidence is sufficient to justify faith in it." This faith, the author says further, is nothing more than the religious counterpart of the hypothetical method of the scientist. All scientific laws are hypotheses and involve the element of faith. The theologian's belief in immortality is likewise an hypothesis and is justified upon the basis of the facts thus far discovered. Of course future investigation may definitely discredit the hypothesis, but so far as we can see at present the evidence is all in the other direction. At this point the

author of course diverges widely from the position held by a scientist like Professor Ostwald and others of the same school whose conclusions have been referred to in an earlier chapter.

The most recent and thoroughgoing plea for what may be styled the evolutionary argument for immortality is that of Professor Simpson of New College, Edinburgh, in his volume entitled, *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*. After tracing in elaborate detail the history of the evolution of man, Professor Simpson reaches the conclusion that freedom is attained as a result of the process and that this freedom is the harbinger of immortality. He deals specifically with the Scriptural doctrine of survival and boldly asserts that the Bible teaches that continuity of personal existence is morally conditioned or to use his own language, "that man is immortable rather than immortal." In somewhat hurried fashion and yet considerably in detail, he reviews the Hebrew doctrine of Sheol and the New Testament teaching concerning eternal life. He concludes that Jesus nowhere unequivocally teaches the immortality of the soul. The expression itself, he says, "is not a Biblical phrase, is not even a Biblical conception." Eternal life with him is something to be won or attained and is not a natural inheritance. A man's life may be lost, "he may be mulcted of his soul." Moreover the teaching of Jesus is not directly connected



with any question of rewards and punishments. Statements in the Gospel which appear to possess this connotation are largely secondary if not late additions. Professor Simpson quotes Dr. Sharman to the effect that Jesus never used the word Gehenna in any other sense than its literal meaning as the Valley of Hinnom. Wherever any other sense is required, the comparative study of documents shows that this sense is derived by subsequent modification of the original words of Jesus. The statement of the rich young ruler, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" together with the answer of Jesus assumes that eternal life is a morally conditioned survival or continuation of being.

In dealing with the fourth gospel, Professor Simpson stresses the statement of Jesus that He is the Resurrection and the life and that eternal life is therefore a present possession rather than something to be acquired in the future. Likewise in discussing the Pauline theology, the same point of view is emphasized. For St. Paul, salvation is a process. Life begins here and goes on without a break. In none of Paul's writings, "is there any suggestion of a resurrection of the wicked." St. Paul never distinguishes between physical and moral destruction. Professor Simpson concedes that there are a few passages in the Pauline and Lucan writings which are contrary to his inter-



pretation. This is especially true of Acts 24:14, 15. Such passages are best understood as expansions of the original data. The other New Testament writers all contribute to the same conclusion. Immortality is the result of conscious union with God and can come only through such union. If we take into account the main line of argument which runs throughout the New Testament, there can be no doubt, from the author's point of view, that the future life is dependent upon our union with the divine life in our present material existence. Jesus explained His own being in this way and obviously intended for His followers to embody the same truth. To quote Professor Simpson's own words:

Yet our Lord's own explanation of His life was that it was one with the life of God—that He so lived and moved and had His being in God that their character and purposes were one. That was the secret of His life, according to Himself—not a Virgin birth. Our Lord Himself never gave that reason, never hinted at it.

Professor Pringle-Pattison in his recent Gifford lectures, to which we have already referred a number of times, adopts substantially the position of Professor Simpson. He reviews in detail the history of the idea of immortality, tracing its earliest appearance in the animistic traditions of primitive man and bringing it down to the most recent period. He shows how the Christian view arose upon the basis of the gospel records and the writings of Paul as interpreted through the medium of

Greek philosophy. In thoroughly illuminating fashion, he interprets the Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines concerning the future life and then proceeds to show how the idea of a soul substance came down from the Middle Age period into modern philosophy. The absurdity of the theory to Professor Pringle-Pattison's mind has been thoroughly demonstrated by numerous writers beginning with David Hume. In a previous chapter, we have dealt with this subject considerably in detail. The Buddhistic doctrine of reincarnation and Karma comes in for some very trenchant criticism as well as the absolutist views of Professors Bradley and Bosanquet. Throughout the rapid review of the various theories treated in the volume there is the clearest and most balanced judgment manifested on the part of the author. Nothing could be more admirable than the manner in which the entire subject is discussed.

With regard to Professor Pringle-Pattison's individual conclusions upon the subject, it is interesting to note that they are practically identical with the view expressed in his earlier series of Gifford lectures upon the idea of God. He does not think that the question of personal survival is as significant as many religious and philosophical authorities have declared. For example, he deprecates Martin Luther's statement, "If you believe in no future life, I would not give a mushroom for your God. Do then as you like. For, if no God, then

no devil, no hell. As with a fallen tree, all is over when you die. Then plunge into lechery, rascality, robbery, and murder.” He also repeats the illustration in his earlier Gifford lectures from the life of Tennyson in which the great English poet is said to have exclaimed, red with excitement, that if immortality is not true, “no God but a mocking fiend created us,” and that if he believed this he would “sink his head tonight in a chloroformed handkerchief and have done with it all.” Pringle-Pattison comments upon this statement to the effect that no attitude could be more irreligious. From his point of view, morality is quite independent of any such considerations and he appears to think that religion might get along without them too, as it did in the Old Testament period for so many years. Nevertheless, in the main the argument of the book is a distinct plea for personal immortality. The author grounds his faith in a future life upon the nature of God as love and the apparent improbability of the Divine Being allowing his children to pass into nothingness after having called them into existence. In rather guarded fashion, he proclaims the doctrine of immortality, as Professor Simpson styles it, arguing that immortality must be attained and will not be thrust upon those who are unwilling to achieve it or who care nothing for it. In the concluding section of his book, he contrasts the two

opposite positions of Plato and Spinoza with regard to the extent of consideration which should be given to the problem of death. The wise man, according to the great Athenian philosopher, is the one who has constantly before him the certainty of death, while the modern philosopher says that there is nothing which the truly wise man will think about so little as his approaching demise. Something can be said for both points of view, but on the whole the preference must be given to the later rather than to the earlier thinker. Life is best spent in the discharge of the present duty and without overmuch concern as to the question of future reward. If we have entered into the divine life while here, we may be well assured that we shall be sharers in that life hereafter. There is something fine about the concluding paragraph of the book:

If we are occupied with thoughts immortal and divine or with some great cause which means for us the kingdom of God on earth, or, for the matter of that, in doing anything that we feel is worth doing, we have neither time nor inclination to brood over our personal future. Our life is full of these objective interests. So death should find us; and to a mind so attuned physical death ought to appear no more than an incident in life, an event to be accepted as naturally as sleep. It should bring with it no suggestion of finality, nor do we find that it really does so in those who thus live. Unbelief in death, it has been said, seems to be the necessary characteristic or concomitant of true spiritual life.

Another thinker of the Scottish school, the late Sir Henry Jones, in his Gifford series published

under the title, *A Faith That Enquires*, takes substantially the same position as Professor Pringle-Pattison. Immortality to him is directly bound up with a belief in the goodness of the Absolute and one genuine failure of the good in any single life would mean a failure of the divine purpose. Denial of the immortality of the soul becomes therefore from his point of view an assertion of absolute skepticism. Sir Henry concedes that there are problems connected with the relation of the finite to the Absolute which are for the present insoluble, but at all costs maintains his faith in God, freedom, and immortality.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE SURRENDER OF IMMORTALITY

AT the beginning of the present study, we referred to the fact that Count Tolstoi and certain other followers of Jesus Christ accept the position that the Christian religion does not require an acceptance of the doctrine of personal survival. These men for the most part make no claim to fellowship with orthodox Christianity, although advocating earnestly a return to the Christian ethic. In recent years, however, we find advocates of the same position occupying places of leadership and importance in organized Christian work. Not a few professors in our theological seminaries occasionally express sentiments of the kind and now and then a similar word is heard from the pulpit.

Perhaps the most notable illustration of this ecclesiastical History in Harvard University. Professor Kirsopp Lake of the Department of Ecclesiastical History in Harvard University. Professor Lake is a scholar of wide repute in his own special field. In the Ingersoll lecture for 1922 on *Immortality and the Modern Mind*, he states with the utmost frankness that not only does he not believe in personal survival but that, like Tol-

stoi, he regards the doctrine as detrimental to the true Christian ethic. Taking the saying of Jesus in Mark 8:35, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it" as the motto of the book and in a certain sense as his own personal creed, the author proceeds to interpret these words in such a way as to eliminate any idea of individual immortality. From the point of view of Doctor Lake, to lose one's self means to surrender those characteristics of individuality and uniqueness which separate us from our fellows and from the Divine Being in order to find a larger life in the future progress of our work. The argument advanced is the same as that of Comte, and George Eliot and Frederic Harrison and the positivists in general that the immortality of influence is all that we can claim and is all that we ought to desire. Professor Lake stresses the altruistic feature of this teaching with persuasive eloquence. To desire immortality for one's own personal existence, he thinks, is an essentially selfish proposal, and in the course of human history has led to unfortunate results. Men were not better during the Medieval period because they believed much more thoroughly in the immortality of the individual soul than they do today. To quote his own language, "Even philanthropy was put on a wrong basis, and the charity of the Middle Ages was less often inspired by love of man than by the hope of heaven. In general there

was produced a type of selfishness all the more repulsive because it was sanctified."

Our modern age has changed entirely men's outlook toward the future life, at least Doctor Lake so interprets present day thinking and action. In his own judgment, this new attitude is destined to be regarded in future history as, "the great change of our time, commensurate with the rise of Christianity or with the Renaissance, far more important than wars or revolutions." The author can see nothing but good in the new point of view. Men no longer strive to achieve heaven for their own individual souls, but they strive to make possible a heaven on earth for their children and descendants. They are only concerned with the good they can do for future generations without any thought of reaping any immediate satisfaction for themselves. Dr. Lake admits that these men are usually materialists and while he does not sympathize with their philosophical background, he does have admiration for the ethical motive which dominates their lives. Speaking of this general class, he says, "Nevertheless there is no type of man at present living who so completely sacrifices himself for the good of others or cares so little about saving his own life. They are not seeking the crown, but many of them are bearing the cross, and though seeking the crown has been the practice of the Christian, bearing the cross was the precept of the Christ."

The reason for the changed point of view concerning the life beyond the grave so widely prevalent during our modern age is explained with the utmost frankness by Professor Lake. A better knowledge of our physical nature and the laws which control life has led to "the conviction that the continuance of sensation is impossible without physical structure, and that the survival of physical structure is extremely improbable." In other words, Professor Lake thinks science has shown us that life is bound up with the bodily organism and when the latter is dissolved by death, it is folly to expect the survival of personality. Like Professor Ostwald, Doctor Lake sees no probability that the soul can survive the body, and apparently has no desire that it should do so. The disbelief in personal immortality is not based upon ethical but rather upon scientific considerations. Men do not reject the orthodox view of the future life because they have discovered it to be selfish and immoral, but because they have found it to be impossible. Inasmuch as it does not exist, they are pleased to learn that it is a detriment rather than a help to their ethical life. In making the most of a presumable loss, they discover that they are better off than they were before the loss occurred.

Professor Lake says that the Christian view of immortality is based upon two distinct strands, the



one he styles the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Flesh and the other the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. The former "was derived through Pharisaic Judaism from Persian thought and was held firmly and even passionately by orthodox Christianity." The latter came from Greek pagan circles and especially the writings of Plato. Paul joined the two ideas together in his teaching concerning the spiritual body in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Professor Lake is not quite sure as to what Paul meant by a spiritual body, but he thinks that it involved in a certain rarefied sense the idea of the Resurrection of the Flesh. After Paul's time, the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul gained precedence over the earlier viewpoint. It came to be the dominant principle in the eschatology of the Middle Ages with Dante's ghastly pictures of the Inferno. In the main, the author follows the general outline already traced at length in this study, so we need pursue this phase of his discussion no further. It may be well to remark, however, that Dr. Lake has small respect for the development of Protestant eschatology with its elimination of purgatory and its retention of the Medieval heaven and hell. He says, "It was a choice infinitely clumsy. It left out the only educative element in the Medieval system and retained an impossible combination of worn-out Persian and Greek mythology."



What is left of the old doctrine at the present time? Doctor Lake thinks there is very little. On the part of both clergy and laity, belief in the Resurrection of the Flesh has become obsolete and the Immortality of the Soul wavers in the balance. Modern science in a very peculiar way agrees with the conclusions of primitive Christian reasoning with regard to the resurrection body. The early Christian could not conceive of a life which did not involve the physical organism and the present day scientist agrees entirely with this point of view. The only difference is that the Christian believed that the body would be raised from the dead in its material form while the scientist believes this to be both impossible and absurd. Christian and scientist alike agree that there can be no personal consciousness without the body. The idea that the soul can be immortal without the bodily organism is rejected quite as completely by the materialistic scientist as it was by the materialistic Christian of the first century.

Professor Lake has little confidence in the evidence for personal immortality furnished by the Society for Psychical Research. He thinks that the phenomena dealt with in the investigations of the Society can be explained by telepathy. In the, to him, extremely improbable event that the telepathic explanation will not hold good, he feels sure that the continuance of life beyond death must in-

volve a material basis. At this point, he agrees with the early Christian attitude. He regards it as much more probable, however, that the permanent survival of individuality is only "a pleasant dream, impossible of fulfillment." This conclusion does not appear to him to be undesirable, as we have already seen. Accepting it frankly, he then proceeds to build up his own theory of the future life which he thinks will provide an adequate and indeed a superior substitute for the older Christian dogma. In brief, this substitute involves two features. The first is the idea of the Eastern mystics that human individuality is merged at death in the one universal Being of God and that the true goal of life is to seek such an identification even before our physical existence terminates. Along with this mystical absorption in the Infinite, the author adds a second feature borrowed directly from the Positivistic conception of the immortality of influence. We live in the good we have done, the unselfish service we have rendered others, the part which we have had in forwarding the general scheme of things. The combination of these two considerations into what may be called a sort of Pantheistic Positivism Professor Lake thinks quite adequate to replace the Pauline doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

The theory of Doctor Lake has been dealt with elsewhere, under other heads, and need not require

lengthy treatment at this time. In all essential particulars, it is simply a revival of the views of Comte with an effort to give them added interest and color by surrounding them with a tinge of Oriental Theosophy. The objections which apply to Positivism and Pantheism in general hold good in the present instance. One cannot see the significance of unselfish sacrifice for the good of the coming generations when according to all the canons of science which the Positivists accept, the material universe is destined to disappear at some future period. All the values preserved by innumerable acts of self-sacrifice through the ages will then be destroyed and leave not a wrack behind. The only way they can be preserved is by the supposition of some sort of spiritual transference and if we accept this in the end we had as well accept it in the beginning. As for the mystical tinge which the theory involves, it is as old as the Upanishads and indeed older. It seems peculiar that it should be revived by a professor of Ecclesiastical History in one of the foremost Christian institutions of the world at the beginning of the twentieth century. The pagan world at the time of Christ was familiar with the doctrine and found it unsatisfying. They turned from it with gladness to accept Paul's proclamation of a genuine personal life beyond the grave. The idea of mystical absorption in the Infinite carried little comfort to troubled souls in

those early days, and it carries little comfort now. Had Christianity proclaimed such a gospel instead of the triumphant message of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, it is safe to say that it would not have gotten very far as a world religion. The Western mind, at least, extracts small satisfaction from the anticipation of Nirvana as the final goal of existence.

We cannot help wondering when we read appeals like those of Professor Lake in favor of substituting the gospel of Buddhism for the message of Christianity just why we should go back to the Ganges and the Indus for inspiration and help. The Oriental world is now turning toward us in order to find material for a new civilization. Buddhism, with its inadequate social development and Hinduism with its caste system and its pessimistic outlook have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. The pragmatic test is against them. Nor can we believe that Dr. Lake himself would like to exchange our Western civilization, inadequately Christian as it is, for the best type of Hindu culture the ages have thus far developed.

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## CHAPTER XII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

IT now becomes necessary for us to gather together and to formulate in as definite fashion as possible the conclusions which our brief historical survey appears to warrant. It is quite obvious that these conclusions must be couched in language which although definite and specific must possess to no slight degree the spirit of humility.

The first conclusion which appears justified is the fact that certain pagan and pre-Christian views which became attached to the early Christian concept of immortality must be definitely cast aside. Much of the Medieval eschatology with its emphasis upon a species of Christian edition of Tartarus has been outgrown by the developing thought of the world. It is impossible for men and women who possess the rudiments of present day culture to think of the future life in precisely the same way that Augustine or Anselm or Calvin thought of it. In certain ultra-conservative circles, the older dogma may remain unimpaired, but these circles must continue to grow smaller and will eventually disappear.

A second inference which the facts seem to warrant is that of the dubious character of the old



Platonic doctrine concerning the inherent immortality of the soul. The idea that all souls are in their nature immortal and that all human beings alike possess such souls is no longer as convincing as it appeared some centuries ago. It is true that a few scientific authorities of note still hold to the "soul substance" viewpoint, but they are in the minority at the present time. The writer does not believe that the Platonic doctrine has been definitely disproved but he does believe that the weight of argument is against it. The case cannot be considered closed and evidence may be produced at some time in the future which will throw an entirely different light on the situation, but as things stand at present the older doctrine appears to be removed from the realm of probability.

So far as the present attitude of philosophy toward the question is concerned, the net result cannot be considered as hostile to immortality. Certain representatives of the modern realistic school, it is true, have discarded any belief in a future life for the individual, but it cannot be said that this is the prevailing teaching of philosophy even in the group indicated. The modern idealistic school, with the exception of some writers like Professors Bradley and Bosanquet, in the main holds to the future life, and there are not a few pluralists and realists who take the same position. On the whole, the net result of speculative thinking down to the

present time cannot be said to be unfavorable to the doctrine of personal immortality. This is the third deduction which appears to be justified by our historical analysis.

In the fourth place, a review of the history of modern science leads to the conclusion that the emphasis upon scientific processes during the last century has certainly modified and in some instances destroyed traditional views of the future life. In certain cases, scientific investigation appears to have led directly to disbelief in personal survival after death. The tendency of scientific thinkers and writers to lean toward a materialistic metaphysic has had its influence in the same direction. On the other hand, the developments in the field of psychical research and the later trend in the interpretation of biological evolution have proved important factors in helping to maintain and strengthen the faith in immortality on the part of many students. It seems fair to the facts to say that the testimony of science thus far has on the whole neither strengthened nor diminished the argument for at least some form of personal survival.

A fifth consideration is the fact that efforts to revive the Oriental philosophy of the future in our western civilization cannot be said to have achieved any marked success. The pantheistic doctrine of the Hindu cults and especially the teachings con-

cerning Karma and Nirvana have not been able to make any marked impression upon western thought. Occasionally a few exceptions may be found as in the case of our modern Theosophists and even certain university teachers, like Professor Lake, but the vast majority of present day thinkers in the western world remain unattracted by the Oriental view of metempsychosis and similar theories.

In connection with the much mooted subject of psychical research, or the argument from spiritualism in its various forms, it may be said, in the sixth place, that the evidence while somewhat impressive at certain points and in a few cases convincing to certain minds still appears to justify the Scottish verdict of "not proven." Beyond any question, the psychical researchers have helped to offset the general materialistic trend of modern science, but this appears to be their most notable contribution, at least down to the present time. This was in substance the verdict of William James and he perhaps knew as much about the facts and was capable of making as unprejudiced deductions from them as anyone who could be named. Psychical research therefore while not proving personal survival has contributed not a little toward strengthening the faith of those who accept the doctrine on other grounds.

When we consider what we must regard as the

real conception of immortality taught in the gospels and by the early church as a whole, that is, the belief that faith in Jesus Christ means incorporation in the divine life and continued existence on this account, it seems obvious to the writer that there is nothing in present day thought which tends to discredit the doctrine. On the contrary, there is much that helps to support and encourage it. More than ever, the futility and purposelessness of existence without the life beyond the grave becomes apparent to the thoughtful Christian of to-day. Theories like those of Professor Lake do not satisfy any more than they have satisfied in the past. Only the consciousness of living fellowship with the Father of our spirits brings satisfaction and peace. As Professor Pringle-Pattison puts it,

Every other being is, as it were, a channel of the Universal Will; but man, as self-conscious, can distinguish himself even from his Maker, and set his own will against the divine. Is it, then, unreasonable to conclude that an individuality so real, and the goal apparently of an age-long process must be capable of surviving the dissolution of the material frame through which it was brought into being? The body, ceasing to be a living body, may relapse into its elements when it has "fulfilled" itself, while the true individual, in which that fulfillment consisted, pursues his destiny under new conditions.

President George E. Horr of the Newton Theological Institution in the Ingersoll Lecture for 1923 stresses this idea of fellowship with the Divine Being with persuasiveness and power. He holds that only through the family concept can the

fatherhood of God be definitely realized. He regards the immortality of influence as altogether inadequate for the conservation of true moral values. He says, "The heirs of a fortune may enter into an inheritance; but the reaction upon the character of the one who by his industry, enterprise, and facing of difficulties gained the wealth, cannot be transmitted to others. The development and enrichment of personality is the consummate result of noble living, and if the living man ceases to exist, that is lost forever. The choicest values persist only in the lives of those who won them; they cannot be transmitted." Dr. Horr defines eternal life in line with the interpretation followed in the first chapter of the present study and asserts that the Easter message of the early church involved this idea as its kernel. The doctrine of the Resurrection as St. Paul taught it embodied the same conception. Moreover, the mystical evidence of experience with the risen Lord in Paul's own life and in the lives of countless Christians since his time has confirmed the theoretical evidence of the reality of the future life. Such proof although incommunicable to others is conclusive and overwhelming to the one who possesses it.

Perhaps the chief drawback in the way of the acceptance of a belief in the life beyond on the part of most doubters of the present day is the modern tendency toward materialism in every form. This



tendency, while rejecting the older and cruder materialistic views of eschatology, has found nothing to take their place. The early Christians thought of heaven and hell under forms of imagery which we consider inadequate and crude. We have not accustomed ourselves to clothing the great truth embodied in the doctrine of immortality with forms of imagery appropriate to our present development. The nearest approach in this direction has been made by Fechner whose little book on the future life remains one of the most appealing and beautiful contributions to the subject. We need a new vision of heaven which will interpret the reality of the life to come in such forms as will be meaningful to our present age. There is too much disposition at the present time to feel that we know nothing about the future life and can know nothing about it, therefore we shall cease to think about it. In the end, of course, there is a tendency for us to give up our faith in it. Reality demands a certain concreteness of imagery and this is as true of the future life as it is of any other consideration in the universe.

After all, one's belief in immortality, like one's belief in God or in any concept that possesses value, demands a certain degree of moral courage and heroism. Professor L. P. Jacks, in his fascinating little book entitled *Religious Perplexities* has called attention to this fact in simple

but unforgettable language. The universe is not adapted to the coward nor to the cowardly type of mind. We are surrounded on all sides by perplexities, but if we are courageous and are willing to exercise faith, we need not fall into the abyss of despair. From the beginning, religion has always been an adventure of the soul. It was so with Abraham and with every member of the noble galaxy who are immortalized in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Without faith it is impossible to please God and faith always demands high-spirited courage and a certain willingness to stake one's all on the reality of goodness and truth. As Professor Jacks says so admirably, Christianity does not pretend to free us from our perplexities, but it does enable us to face them boldly and to triumph over them. Like the great Apostle to the Gentiles, we are always perplexed, "but not unto despair."

There is nothing in the history of either philosophy or science which makes faith in the future life as Christ taught it any more difficult today than it has been in the past. Always there has been room for doubt and disbelief and it does not appear that this situation will vanish with earthly conditions as they now are. On the other hand, there are many things in the progress of knowledge which lend encouragement to faith, while there is nothing which forbids its exercise.

On the memorial tablet to Frederic W. H. Myers in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome, there is written this quotation from the fourth verse of the twenty-first Psalm: "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days forever and ever." Just beneath the tablet, which is fastened to the old Roman wall, there is the marble slab which covers the ashes of Shelley. On the English poet's tomb is engraved the well-known quotation from *The Tempest*:

There is nothing that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

The two epitaphs bear silent witness to the true gospel of immortality. Our Father has given us "length of days forever and forever" because we are His children, but this new life will mean a transition "into something rich and strange" after the experience we call death. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," but we need not fear, for we know that we shall live in His home where there are many mansions and that through His gracious love "we shall be like Him."

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HORIZONS OF IMMORTALITY  
PART II. CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS

*"Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure"*

JESUS said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

—*Jesus Christ*



## CHAPTER XIII

### FAITH IN THE SOUL

OUR study up to the present point has been of a purely historical character. We have outlined in the briefest possible fashion what men have thought about the future life during the last two thousand years. We have tried to reach certain critical conclusions as the result of this historical survey. Doubtless these conclusions will seem to many readers of a rather negative character. They certainly do not justify us in asserting that the future life can be regarded as a datum of science. On the other hand, they assuredly do not make it scientifically necessary for one to disbelieve in immortality. The field is left open for the exercise of the will to believe, or in other words, the question remains in the realm of faith where it has always been in the past.

The writer frankly confesses that he would like to see the subject removed from the realm of faith to the realm of science. He confesses thorough sympathy with every effort which has been and is being made to achieve this result. He believes that if it could be scientifically demonstrated that human beings are immortal, such a discovery would

be the most important that has thus far been made in the history of the human race. Christianity owed its success in the first place to the preaching of the Resurrection. Now the Resurrection is nothing more than a scientific demonstration of the reality of the future life. From a theological point of view, it is easy to understand why the unique character of Jesus made his Resurrection a unique event in world history, but this fact removes the Resurrection from the field of scientific study as we know it. While the Resurrection of Jesus becomes therefore a tremendous aid to faith in the reality of a future life, it does not help to transfer the problem from the realm of faith to the realm of science. If this transfer could be made, it would simply confirm the teaching of Jesus with regard to the future, and confirm it in such a way that there would be no possibility of doubting it.

If immortality could be scientifically demonstrated, the fact would unquestionably produce vast changes in all forms of human activity. Nothing would tend to overthrow materialism in all of its forms like such a demonstration. We are not now concerned primarily with the question of ethics. Opinions differ widely as to the value of a belief in immortality in the realm of pure ethics. We have already referred to the fact that Prof. Pringle-Pattison, in common with many other thinkers, regards such a belief as of no particular ethical significance. People ought to be good

whether they are to live hereafter or not, and if they are not good without the spur of future rewards or punishments, their goodness possesses no real ethical value. On the other hand, many distinguished names including among others those of Luther, Augustine, Wesley, Browning, Tennyson, and Longfellow regard immortality as a distinct ethical factor. Whatever position we take with regard to its influence upon morals, there can be no question about the fact that belief in a future life has a profound bearing upon human behavior. If the average man accepted immortality as a scientific fact, it would introduce an item into the calculations of his daily life which would profoundly affect his actions. Professor Pringle-Pattison himself would probably act somewhat differently in the light of an assured immortality and so would all the rest of us. Browning in his little poem entitled "A Grammarian's Funeral" has shown how this assurance works out in the field of pure scholarship. The hero of the poem is so convinced that he will have eternity in which to continue his studies that he attacks small and insignificant questions in this life, leaving the larger issues for the period hereafter when he will have more time to study them. If he had felt any doubt concerning his personal immortality, he would have acted very differently in choosing his studies. At bottom, every human being is like the grammarian. There is no important step in life which the assur-

ance of immortality does not affect. Whether it be in the field of education or business or of politics or of social life, the knowledge that death does not end all would necessarily have the most profound influence upon behavior. So long as immortality has not received scientific demonstration, it is of the utmost significance that the strongest possible faith in it should be developed. This faith may become so strong as almost to pass over into the field of assured demonstration. It is this kind of faith to which Paul referred when he said, "I know whom I have believed," and it is this kind of faith which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls the substance of things hoped for, the evidence, or assurance, of things not seen. When we pass over from the realm of science into the realm of faith, it is possible to possess all shades of conviction ranging from the practical certainty of Paul to the half indefinite apprehension of the modern materialist which is only one shade removed from positive disbelief. The function of religion is to strengthen faith, and there is no item of faith which is more important than the belief in a future life. Some devout souls have felt that to remove this question from the realm of faith to that of fact would mean a distinct loss. As already noted, we do not at all share this belief. There will always be enough of material for the exercise of faith even if this all important issue should be included among the data of science.

The most important consideration in developing real faith in personal immortality is the recognition of the value and reality of human personality. It is useless to talk about the immortality of the soul if there is no soul to be immortal. It is a waste of time to argue in favor of the persistence of the self if there is no self to persist. Hence, the starting point of any real faith in the significance of the future lies in building up a faith in the significance of the present. There is a type of mechanistic psychology which explains all human behavior in terms of physical reaction. Those who accept this view do not of course believe in immortality. Nevertheless, even the most cocksure representatives of this school of thought will hardly assert that their position represents anything more than an hypothesis. The facts which this hypothesis is intended to explain may be explained in other ways and are thus explained by many psychologists. Professor McDougall, for example, although a thoroughgoing scientist, does not accept the mechanistic interpretation. He is one of those thinkers who, while not particularly desirous of immortality, yet believes that the human self is of such a character that immortality is inherently probable. The fact is that while human behavior has a distinctly mechanistic side, when it is considered in its larger aspects, it passes beyond the mechanistic field. We doubt whether the most frantic behaviorist does not occasionally have



moments of sober reflection when he takes himself more seriously than the strict logic of his theory will permit. We shall have something more to say about this feature of the situation a little later.

Nothing has helped to stimulate faith in the real significance and value of the human soul during recent years more than the development of the comparatively new science known as the psychology of religion. Starting out from a purely positivistic and mechanistic point of view, the psychology of religion has developed to a point where it has become a distinct adjunct to faith. The recent works of Pratt, Thouless, Selbie, and Strickland in this field all give encouragement to a belief in the value of the human soul and in the probability of its persistence after it has passed through the experience we call death. It may be worth our while to turn for a few moments to the testimony of some of these later psychologists. Says Professor Pratt in Chapter XI of *The Religious Consciousness*:

If we analyze the emotional form of conviction concerning immortality we shall, I think, find that in most cases it is based upon a direct apprehension of the essential worth of the self; going back, I suppose, to the instinct of self-assertion—if indeed it does not go back farther than any instinct.

In another place in the same chapter he refers to the Platonic emphasis upon the dignity of the human soul as after all the surest basis of its continued existence. Professor Pratt does not think

that modern psychology has made it impossible for one to believe in the absolute worth of the human spirit. He says:

Probably the argument for immortality that is both most generally persuasive and logically the soundest consists in pointing out the essential difference between consciousness and its processes on the one hand, and the material world and its laws on the other. This is, of course, the essence of the Platonic arguments, and nothing better is likely ever to be suggested.

Principal Selbie in his recently published text on *The Psychology of Religion* (Oxford, 1924), takes substantially the same position as Professor Pratt. He says among other things:

Leaving the religious question for the moment, we find that the real ground for the persistence of the belief in immortality among reflective men is to be found in the working of consciousness. The primitive belief in spirits has its counterpart in civilized and more sophisticated minds in a recoil from the merely mechanical view of life, and a consciousness of the self as spiritual in the sense of being independent and even master of the fleshly and material life.

Professor Strickland (*Psychology of Religious Experience*, New York, 1924) gives two reasons for believing that the soul survives after death. These two reasons represent the culmination of the concluding chapter of his book in which he deals with the subject of immortality in its relation to psychology and religion:

First. The control of mind over organic process, which is increasingly evident at certain levels of human experience, points to the growing independence of mind and to the possibility of the self surviving the organism.

Second. The capacity of the self to organize experience increasingly in terms of the higher social values (as contrasted with mere organic needs) points to the possibility of the self surviving the organism.

Until we can secure a greater weight of objective evidence for human survival, our argument must always turn largely upon an appeal to the consciousness of the individual. Plato's feeling of the native worth of the soul has about it a touch of reality which defies skepticism. The argument for immortality in the *Phaedo* while technically outworn possesses a perennial freshness because of its appeal to personal consciousness. Socrates calmly looking upon the hemlock as a trivial incident in a career which is to be only triflingly interrupted, represents, of course, the real argument of the book. Nearly twenty-five centuries later, Mr. Clement C. J. Webb in his second series of *Gifford Lectures* writes of the soul in terms that are as Socratic as our modern idiom will permit:

I speak in the text of "mind or soul" for the following reason. It is the "mind" as the subject of experience which is thus so remarkably distinguished from the body as including instead of excluding within its own unity that with which it is connected in a system. If we attribute to the "soul" vital activities below the level of consciousness, this may not seem to be true in the same way of the "soul." But, in the first place, the characteristic difference of organic growth from inorganic aggregation seems to lie in a process of assimilation which anticipates, as it were, the process of drawing within the unity of its own experience which is the characteristic of "mind." And in the second place, as was pointed

out in my previous course of Lectures, we may be said to have in Life generally something which, as distinct from mere mechanism, we interpret on the analogy of Mind.

Like Plato and Socrates, Kant and Höffding find immortality fundamentally a problem in the conservation of values. If personality is valuable and there is any meaning in the universe, personality must be preserved. Moreover, personal values cannot be transferred because the very essence of personality consists in its uniqueness. A man may leave his thought and his works to posterity, but if any worth attaches to the man himself, this worth cannot be passed on to others. There is something about the human consciousness which seems to give the lie to mechanism. We may argue ourselves into the belief that we are nothing but physical reactions, but all the while there is a subtle contradiction underlying our argument. The self which knows and which knows that it knows is a larger thing than the mechanism which it analyzes. Even those who have not accepted orthodox religious views concerning the nature of the soul have at times acknowledged their inability to get away from the idea. One of the most notable illustrations of this fact is to be found in the often quoted passage from Huxley's Letters:

It is a curious thing that I find my dislike to the thought of extinction increasing as I get older and nearer the goal. It flashes across me at all sorts of times and with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more of what is going on than I

did in 1800. I had sooner be in hell a good deal—at any rate in one of the upper circles where the climate and company are not too trying.

In much the same fashion Dr. Felix Adler, the distinguished advocate of Ethical Culture, writes:

Only this I feel warranted in holding fast to, that the root of my selfhood, the best that is in me, my true and only being, cannot perish. In regard to that the notion of death seems to me to be irrelevant.

It would be easy to multiply quotations of this character. There are few thoughtful people who do not at some time or other possess what may be styled the consciousness of immortality. Of course this consciousness may be regarded as an illusion and may be dismissed summarily on this account. On the other hand, it may be cherished and may become a definite ground of assurance to those who possess it. Some years ago before a student meeting at Princeton University, Dr. Robert E. Speer in asserting his own consciousness of the reality of the human spirit used this expression, “Gentlemen, I do not have a soul; I *am* a soul.” Among modern philosophers, Bergson has seized upon this primary consciousness of the reality of the self and has made it the basis of his system. William James also has called attention to the superior value of this feeling of reality when contrasted with the more subtle second-hand speculations of metaphysics. There is therefore good warrant in



the realms of both science and philosophy for believing in the reality and the worth of human personality. Such belief will not always lead to a conviction that the self is immortal, but it is almost a necessary presupposition of faith in a future life. Moreover, it naturally leads to such a philosophy of the world as makes immortality reasonable and probable.

“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Nothing at all, if our modern mechanists are right, for according to them, the soul is a chimera and one would be foolish to exchange anything of value for it. Some of us, however, will continue to believe that Jesus knew more about the matter than the mechanists. In our daily experience, things are constantly happening which upset the mechanistic hypothesis. A few years ago such an event occurred in connection with that wild and weird return journey of Captain Scott and his companions from the South Pole. One of the party, Captain Oates, had his feet frozen, and had to be carried along through the blinding snow-storm by his comrades. He begged them to leave him behind so that they might have a chance to save their own lives, but his proposal was met with scorn. Finally, when they halted for the night, at one of the last stations which the party was able to make, Oates staggered out of the hut into the storm with the remark, “I am just going outside, and may be gone some time.” His comrades never

saw him again, and when the party which had been sent out to rescue Captain Scott found the dead members of the band, Scott with his journal in his hand, they were unable to locate the body of Oates. In memory of his heroic action, they set up a cross near the spot where he wandered out into the storm and wrote this inscription upon it: "Hereabouts died a very gallant gentleman." Scott, in the last entry of his diary, had written: "The Great God has called me. Take comfort in that. I die at peace with the world and myself and not afraid." He and his companions had taken as their motto the words, "To seek—to strive—to find and not to yield."

Frank Parker Stockbridge has written a poem upon the epitaph of Oates which was published a few years ago in *Everybody's Magazine*. It is entitled "A Very Gallant Gentleman" and sums up the argument of this chapter in such a clear and forceful way that we quote it entire:

So that's the answer, eh? We're only lumps  
Of ordinary chemicals—some salts,  
Acids, and gases, accidentally grouped  
In cell-formation? There creation halts,  
You say, and what comes next is just what comes  
When you put this and that and t'other bit  
Of inorganic matter in your tube  
And watch the mixture swirl and seethe and spit  
Till all its atoms find affinities.

That's all, you say? Then life and love and hate,  
 Courage and hope and anguish and despair,  
 The will to strive, the pride of duty done,  
 The fear of shame that drives the coward to dare  
 The death he dreads—all these, you say, are one  
 With your reactions done in Jena glass?

O shrewd philosophers! Your simple plan  
 To shift the whole responsibility  
 For all we are and all we hope to be—  
 How easy! "Here's a compound we call man,  
 And here's one called a rock, and here's a cliff.  
 The rock rolls off the cliff and kills the man;  
 But can you blame the rock? Nor can you if  
 The man obeys the natural laws that pull  
 All of us, always, down and ever down.  
 For if we sink 'reactions'—that absolves,  
 And if we rise—'reactions'—nothing more."

\* \* \* \* \*

Pardon me, gentlemen, but—"it's a lie."  
 "Reactions," eh? Well, what's your formula  
 For one particular kind—I won't insist  
 On proof of every theorem in the list;  
 But only one—what chemicals combine,  
 What  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ ,  
 To cause such things as happened yesterday,  
 To send a very gallant gentleman  
 Into antarctic night, to perish there  
 Alone, not driv'n nor shamed nor cheered to die,  
 But fighting, as mankind has always fought,  
 His baser self, and conquering, as mankind  
 Down the long years has always conquered self.

What are *your* tests to prove a man's a man?  
 Which of *your* compounds ever lightly threw  
 Its life away, as men have always done,  
 Spurr'd not by lust nor greed nor hope of fame

But casting all aside on the bare chance  
 That it might somehow serve the Greater Good?  
*There's* a reaction—what's *its* formula?  
 Produce *that* in your test tubes if you can!"'

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## CHAPTER XIV

### FAITH IN GOD

IN his recent volume of criticism entitled *Mammonart*, Mr. Upton Sinclair refers to God as "the greatest of all auto-suggestions." This definition is not at all new, although it has not always been stated in exactly the same way. Robert Ingersoll expressed it facetiously when he referred to God as having been created in the image of man instead of man in the image of God. Quite a number of modern psychologists refer to the Deity as purely a subjective idea or ideal without any objective existence. Such writers assert that the idea has value and therefore should be retained. They speak of themselves as Theists and frequently as Christians. They believe in God, but the God in whom they believe turns out to be nothing more than an idea which they have themselves created.

Those who accept this subjective view of the Deity of course have little use for the doctrine of immortality. Long ago Kant saw that without the reality of God, both freedom and immortality become meaningless terms. If there is a moral universe there must be a God, and if there is a God, there must be a hereafter for the human spirit. So the Königsberg philosopher reasoned, and his argument still holds. People who do not believe in



immortality do not usually believe in a personal God, while those who believe in such a Deity usually anticipate a life to come. There are of course exceptions to the rule, but they are neither numerous nor significant. The present day decline in faith concerning the future life has been accompanied by a decline in faith in a personal God. Professor Leuba's questionnaire referred to in a previous chapter is an illustration of this fact. Belief in God and in immortality were linked together in most of the responses which he received.

The theory which regards God as merely a subjective creation always insists upon the necessity of thinking and acting as though he were real. Prayer from this point of view is of course nothing but auto-suggestion and yet prayer is a good thing. The difficulty about the theory is that it defeats its own end. God is looked upon as a valuable and serviceable idea, but when an individual comes to regard God as nothing more than an idea, the idea itself ceases to possess value. Assuming that prayer is nothing but auto-suggestion, it soon loses all value as prayer when this view of its nature comes to be held by the one who prays. One may logically suggest to himself desirable ends after the fashion of M. Coué, but even M. Coué never prays to himself. What prayer logically means to a disciple of the subjective theory is vividly brought out in the following petition which may be called the model prayer of the Positivist:

O thou great Construct of our social aspirations! Thou who hast arisen out of millennial attitudes and who in thyself, which art a social personal self, dost enshrine all social personal virtues, thou who wilt function in us who are social personal centres of sentience in accordance with adjustments which we make in our social strivings, thou who dost exist only in our own social consciousnesses, we beseech thee for nothing, knowing that thou canst give us nothing, thank thee for what we have ourselves achieved, and ask only for the peace of relaxation which comes from auto-suggestion arising from our idea of Thee which we enlarge daily in our evolution.

Perhaps few subjectivists ever use such a prayer as this in actual experience, and yet it is just the kind of prayer which the logic of their theory demands. The fact that it is not used simply proves that the idea of prayer like the idea of the Deity no longer possesses value when it is regarded as purely subjective. Prayer may be nothing more than auto-suggestion, but we must believe it to be something more if we are to continue to pray. The attempt to hold on to it while at the same time accepting a theory of its nature which deprives it of all meaning or value is simply an impossible combination.

If modern subjectivism has undermined a vital belief in God, it is also true that the older views of orthodoxy are equally valueless for thoughtful minds of the present age. It is impossible for us to think of God just as Augustine or Calvin thought of Him, or as He is defined in the older standards. The doctrine of predestination which is indissolubly associated with the older views of the Deity is

out of harmony with modern ethical conceptions and if insisted upon can only add to the prevailing skepticism. In our historical survey we have dealt with these older conceptions at sufficient length and need not refer to them further. What we wish to emphasize is the fact that while we must believe in a God who is real, He need not be the God of the Augustinian theology. Modern subjectivism has practically eliminated God entirely, but we shall not meet its arguments by going back to outworn dogmas. We must meet them by holding up the God of the New Testament, and not the God of later creedal formulations. As between a deity who possesses the unethical attributes which we find depicted in the pages of St. Augustine and the shadowy ideal worshiped by modern Positivism, many will prefer the latter. What is needed is a concept of God which does not deprive Him of objectivity but which is also capable of intelligent acceptance by the modern mind.

Such a concept we are constrained to believe is to be found in the early Christian view of the revelations of God in Jesus Christ. Professor McGiffert in his recently published volume of lectures, entitled *The God of the Early Christians*, has shown with admirable clearness that it was this conception of the Deity which dominated the thinking of the early Gentile Christian community. It was not until later that the more highly speculative theories embodied in the Nicene and Athanasian

Creeds came to be accepted. The early Christians looked upon Jesus as the highest embodiment of God which men can understand or know. Jesus was real to them, and therefore God was real. Jesus had been raised from the dead and had promised eternal life to his followers; therefore, they believed unhesitatingly in personal immortality. This simple faith in a few short years conquered the world. There is nothing to indicate that it has lost its power today. If people do not believe in God at the present time, it is largely because they no longer find it possible to infuse reality into an outworn metaphysical concept. It is still possible, however, to believe in a God who is like Jesus Christ. Not that Jesus in His earthly existence exhausted all of the fulness of the divine nature, for He nowhere claims this, but simply that He reveals to us as much of God as we are able to understand or to know. Having seen Him, we have seen the Father. This is the tremendous value of the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Not only does this doctrine identify God with the highest ethical ideal which the world has ever seen or known, but it also takes God out of the realm of abstractions and subjective ideas and makes Him supremely personal and real.

It is just such a concept of God which our modern age demands. The reality of the future life

was never more vivid or more powerful than it was in the early days of Christianity. Faith in it was then so strong that it almost passed over into knowledge. The basis of this faith was the idea of God which was held by the early Christians. We cannot hope to recover the one thing without recovering the other. When we can whole-heartedly believe that God is real and not a mere idea or subjective impression, and furthermore that in His reality He is more like Jesus Christ than He is like anyone else we know or can know, we shall take a different attitude toward the future life.

It may be objected that such a conception of the Deity as we have just outlined is inadequate and incomplete. It says nothing about problems of creation, omniscience, omnipresence, and a host of other features dear to the theologians of all ages. The advantage of the doctrine as we see it consists precisely in the fact that it does not dogmatize about such things. The God of the creeds is based upon a monistic metaphysics which modern science has sorely riddled. Under the assaults of men like James, Ward, Schiller, Dewey, and other pluralists and pragmatists, the old absolutism in philosophy seems tottering to ruin. The early Christian conception of God is not affected by the controversy between monism and pluralism. As William James has shown, the God of the gospels fits into



a pluralistic scheme of the universe without the slightest difficulty. The conception of God in Christ is just as vital today as it ever was. This is not true of any other view of the nature of God. Humanity has always loved Jesus Christ and has always believed in Him. To accept Him as God or perhaps more correctly as the highest revelation of God which we can know is the supreme need of our own age as it has been of the ages past. With this acceptance will come an ever deepening and increasing faith in the reality of the future life. Like the early Christians, we shall come to know that for us as for them, death is swallowed up in victory.

Nothing in what has been written is intended to destroy the faith of those who still cling to the old theological interpretations of the Deity and find them vital and satisfying. A man may have as much theology as he pleases provided his theology does not entirely obscure his God. The supreme Teacher expressed what is needed when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." Any conception of the Deity which makes such a personal devotion possible will lead to a more robust faith in immortality.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE SEERS

THE poet is essentially a seer. The poets themselves have always recognized this fact, and however devoted to the technique of their craft they may have been, they have always left a large place for inspiration in explaining their work. Wordsworth had a certain theory of art which he thought important, but practically everybody who reads his poems agrees that whatever value they possess was produced in spite of the author's theory, and not on account of it. In like manner, Edgar Allan Poe wrote an essay explaining the purely mechanical character of his poetry, but no other person has ever been able to write poetry like *The Raven* or *The Bells* by following Poe's directions. We may not be able to explain inspiration or genius, but no one doubts that these words represent facts and facts of tremendous importance to the human race. The truth which comes by way of inspiration is in fact first-hand material, while the truth arrived at by logical processes is always second-hand. It is the difference between genius and talent, between the artist and the pedant, between insight and the mechanical accumulations of facts. The common people of Judea understood the con-

trast when they commented upon the messages of Jesus by saying that He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. To the scribal group belong many modern representatives—critics, scientists, pedagogues, smart writers, doctors of philosophy, of divinity, and of laws, dreary and dry-as-dust authorities of every description. These purveyors of second-hand knowledge bulk large in questionnaires like those of Professor Leuba, himself an admirable representative of the group, and in the catalogue of contributors to our technical magazines. Such folk are useful after their fashion, but the fires of faith always burn low in them. They sit in judgment on their betters and find a sort of sardonic satisfaction in pouring water upon the divine fire which they themselves cannot kindle.

The poets have always had a good deal to say about immortality. It is true that not all of them have believed in it, but when one calls the roll of the ages, it is astonishing how small is the number of skeptics. The ancient Hebrews possessed a religion which was notoriously silent concerning the future life, and yet the Hebrew poets frequently rise above the level of thought of their people, and at least touch the borders of eternal life. If there is any doctrine of immortality at all in the Old Testament, it is to be found in the writings of the poet, and not in those of the historians or law-givers. There are certain Psalms which assuredly seem to hint at immortality, and our ordinary

burial service contains quotations from Job which rightly or wrongly have been usually held to refer to the resurrection from the dead. Such quotations as "I know that my Redeemer liveth" and "Thou wilt not permit my soul to remain in Sheol" may not directly refer to personal immortality, but most people will agree that they at least look in that direction.

The future life is discussed by nearly all the Greek poets, and is regarded as almost axiomatic in their pages. It is true that the Hellenic writers do not agree in their pictures of the life beyond the grave. Homer, as we have noted elsewhere, has vividly described the future world in one of the most dramatic passages of the *Odyssey*, a description which served as a model to Virgil for the sixth book of the *Æneid* and of which Dante also made good use. Homer, like most of his countrymen, regarded the future world as a land of shadows where existence is not at all as desirable or as real as it is here. Nevertheless, this existence possesses a reality of its kind, and the ghostlike shades of this nether world are gifted with memory, with emotions, and with imagination. When one listens to the confused and puerile messages which our modern mediums purport to bring us from the spirit world, he secures an impression of that state of existence which is not far removed from the picture given in the pages of Homer.

The religions of the world have in the main fol-



lowed three different conceptions in their interpretations of the future life. In the East, the idea of Nirvana or of complete absorption in the Infinite, carrying with it the loss of individual existence, has always prevailed. In the West, due chiefly to the influence of Christianity, the future life has been consistently pictured as superior to the present. Individuality is not to be swallowed up in the Infinite, but on the contrary, is to be heightened and enriched. As the Apostle Paul expressed it, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Professor Selbie interprets the Western point of view admirably when he says: "From the point of view of religion it must always be remembered that what is anticipated in the future is not mere survival, but a life of a higher and more desirable kind than that of earth."

The early Greek interpretation occupies a middle ground position between the Oriental and the Western. Individuals live after death and preserve their identity, but the future life is neither so rich nor so desirable as the present existence. This, at any rate, is the general point of view of Homer and the poets who belong to his period.

Among the Greek tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the doctrine of the future life progresses toward something more typically Western than the earlier views of Homer. Greek tragedy is chiefly concerned with the power of the Fates over human beings and this power extends to

the future as well as to the present. The picture of the hereafter which Sophocles draws in *The Antigone* is much like that given by Homer. Antigone gives up her own life in order that her brother's shade may rest in peace. Her action is not made less tragic by any glorification of the reward which she will receive hereafter for her piety. The general impression of the future which one secures from the play is gloomy and pessimistic. This holds good in the main of the Greek tragedies throughout, although there are occasional glimpses of something better, especially in the later poets. Euripides is a rebel and a good deal of a skeptic whose eschatology is somewhat difficult to determine. It is in the writings of Plato, the philosopher-poet of the ages, that we secure the finest idealization of the life to come. Plato looks upon death as a liberating experience which frees the soul from the shackles of material existence. We are not really born until we die. The body is a clog upon the soul and the latter cannot be free and unhampered in our present material existence. Plato makes Socrates say in the *Phaedo*:

For I am quite ready to acknowledge, Simmias and Cebes, that I ought to be grieved at death, if I were not persuaded that I am going to other gods who are wise and good and to men departed who are better than those whom I leave behind; and therefore I do not grieve as I might have done, for I have good hope that there is yet something remaining for the dead, and as has been said of old, some far better thing for the good than for the evil.

In Roman poetry we find a distinct advance over at least the earlier Hellenic views of immortality. Lucretius, it is true, stands out as the one great atheistical poet of the ages, but he is practically alone among the poets of his own nation in his skeptical views concerning the future life. Horace was an Epicurean and was vastly more concerned with the pleasures of the present life than with anything that might conceivably happen to him in the future. Nevertheless, he had a tolerably wholesome fear of the gods and seems to have entertained the usual opinions of his countrymen with regard to Tartarus and Elysium. It is in Virgil that we find the most definite and specific eschatology of the ancient world. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments which had been slowly evolving from the time of Homer, finds its most complete expression in the great epic stanzas of Virgil. So appealing was the Roman poet's view of the future life that it was in large measure taken over by the later Christian theologians, and Dante appropriates it almost bodily in the pages of his *Inferno*. Dante looks upon Virgil as substantially a Christian, and the older poet becomes his guide through the devious paths of the nether world.

The poetry of the Middle Ages is practically incarnated in the writings of Dante. There are, it is true, other great names, but they become insignificant by comparison with the great genius of Florence. The *Divine Comedy* is not

only a poem, but also an interpretation. It pictures the spirit of the Middle Ages in the most complete and unforgettable fashion. Catholic Christianity as it existed in the days of Anselm and Aquinas and Francis of Assisi was interested much more in the future than in the present. It was fundamentally other-worldly in the full sense of that much abused word. Dante reflects this spirit in thoroughgoing fashion in his great epic. While Homer and Virgil had devoted considerable space to the future world in their poems, Dante makes the future life his sole object of attention. There can be no doubt but that the great Florentine was sincere in what he wrote. He believed in immortality and considered it of greater importance than any other theme.

It is impossible within the limitations of the present chapter to discuss the contributions of even the leading modern poets to the subject of personal immortality. We must confine ourselves to the literature of one country alone and to only a few representative names from the galaxy which confronts us. English literature begins properly with Chaucer, and from Chaucer to Tennyson and Robert Browning English poetry has always taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. There have been a few exceptions of course, but they are scarcely worth mentioning. Even Kit Marlowe who was considered an atheist in his own day has left behind some of the most vivid pictures of the

future life in the pages of literature. One can scarcely escape the conviction that in Mortimer's farewell words in the play *Edward the Second*, Marlowe's latest production, the poet is speaking out of the depths of his own soul:

Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel  
 There is a point, to which when men aspire,  
 They tumble headlong down; that point I touched,  
 And seeing there was no place to mount up higher,  
 Why should I grieve at my declining fall?  
 Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,  
 That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,  
 Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

The Elizabethan dramatists in general echoed similar sentiments. Shakespeare has sometimes been cited as an agnostic with regard to the future life, but such a view is based upon an incomplete induction. For example, Prospero's words in *The Tempest*

We are such stuff  
 As dreams are made of, and our little life  
 Is rounded with a sleep,

are mistakenly quoted as proving that their author regarded death as an eternal sleep. Such critics forget that Ariel in the same play says:

There is nothing that doth fade  
 But doth suffer a sea change  
 Into something rich and strange.

Both Jesus and Paul referred to death as a sleep without either of them thinking of it as a sleep which should never know an awakening. Shakes-



peare's real attitude is brought out pretty thoroughly in *Hamlet*. Here again the famous third soliloquy is quoted as proving that the great dramatist had doubts about the future. It is true that Hamlet is pictured as weighing the question of suicide and as rather expressing a desire that death should be nothing more than an endless sleep. Had he been able to bring his judgment into line with his desires, he would no doubt have taken his own life. The fact that he did not commit suicide proves that he at least regarded future existence as highly probable. Of course the whole play of *Hamlet* is based upon the idea that there is a future life. The appearances of the ghost of Hamlet's father, the numerous references to prayer which the play contains, and the atmosphere of the supernatural which envelops it throughout, all bear witness to this fact. It is true that Shakespeare's pictures of the future life are not always attractive. Claudio, for example, in *Measure for Measure*, says:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;  
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
And blow with restless violence round about  
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those that lawless and incertain thought  
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!

The weariest and most loathed worldly life  
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.

It should always be remembered that the above lines were spoken in character and that Claudio's life had been such as to justify him in anticipating an unpleasant future if the ordinary teachings of the church were accepted. The picture itself seems to be drawn partly from Dante's *Inferno* and partly from the *Odyssey* of Homer. It is one of the few illustrations in English literature of a conception of the future which reinterprets the spirit of the old Greek poets.

The Puritan poets who followed Shakespeare were of course thoroughgoing believers in immortality. Milton, the most outstanding figure of the group, is as much interested in the future life as is Dante, although from a different point of view. *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* constitute the great epic trilogy of Protestantism as the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradisio* of Dante constitute the great epic of Catholicism. Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton, the four great epic writers of the world, were all profoundly concerned with the problem of immortality and were all unhesitating believers in a future life.

English poetry of the Restoration period was dominated by the Deistical philosophy of the eight-

eenth century to a large extent, and yet there is no poet of the period who disputes the fact of personal immortality. This was true of Pope and Dryden as well as of Goldsmith and Gray. Addison's *Cato*, perhaps the most popular tragedy of the period, contains a poetical epitome of Plato's argument for immortality which is one of the most famous interpretations of the doctrine:

The soul, secure in her existence, smiles  
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.  
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,  
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,  
The wrecks of matter, and the crash of worlds.

Thomas Gray, in his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, has voiced the orthodox Christian views of death and immortality with such power and pathos that this poem is sometimes regarded as the most popular poetical production in the English language. The poem itself without making any specific argument for personal survival is steeped in the atmosphere of immortality to which direct reference is made in the concluding stanza:

No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),  
The bosom of his Father and his God.

The poets of the Romantic reaction including among others Burns, Cowper, Southey, Coleridge,

and Wordsworth were all firm believers in immortality. Burns delighted in criticizing the foibles of the clergy, but he was soundly religious at heart. It would be easy to construct a complete eschatology from his poems and there is no doubt about his thoroughgoing belief in a future life. In one of his best known letters he refers to the picture of the redeemed in the concluding verses of the seventh chapter of the Apocalypse as his favorite passage in the Bible. We do not have space to quote specific passages from the poems of Burns, but any one who will take the trouble to review his lyrics will find abundant illustrations of his belief in a future life. William Wordsworth was a disciple of Plato and more than any other poet with the possible exception of Emerson has embodied the Platonic philosophy in his writings. The most popular of his shorter poems deals directly with the subject under discussion. It is of course his famous *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* in which he taught along with Plato the doctrine of pre-existence as well as that of the future life:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

The poets of the French Revolution, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, were all rebels, and yet their poems contain many references to immortality. Byron, like Burns, took a special delight in criticizing orthodox views of religion and morals, but he frequently asserts his belief in the life to come. For example, in *Manfred*, where most critics agree he identifies his hero with himself, he uses this language:

The mind which is immortal makes itself  
Requital for its good or evil thoughts—  
Is its own origin of ill and end,  
And its own place and time: its innate sense,  
When stripp'd of this mortality, derives  
No color from the fleeting things without;  
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,  
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.

Shelley, who was more unorthodox than Byron, is usually regarded as a Pantheist and some of his poems undoubtedly reflect Pantheistic sentiment. He was such a devoted admirer of Plato, and Platonic allusions occur so often in his writings that his Pantheism is not infrequently tinged with the coloring of personal immortality. For example, the Platonic conception of life as a sort of dream-existence which is to be removed at death occurs many times in the writings of Shelley in passages like this:

I dare not guess; but in this life  
Of error, ignorance, and strife,  
Where nothing is, but all things seem,  
And we the shadows of the dream,



It is a modest creed, and yet  
Pleasant if one considers it,  
To own that death itself must be,  
Like all the rest, a mockery.

Or in even more undisguised fashion:

Death is the veil which those who live call life.  
We sleep, and it is lifted.

Keats was not so much of a philosopher as Shelley, but on the contrary devoted his life to the worship of pure beauty. Beauty to him was immortal, and he could not think of it as ever passing away. His creed is expressed in the famous passage:

Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

The question of personal immortality does not appear to have concerned him aside from its bearing upon the problem of the immortality of art. Keats, like Shelley and Byron, died young, and his views of life were no doubt immature. If we accept the idea that aesthetic values are heightened by belief in God and immortality as Kant, Höffding, and quite recently Lord Balfour in his *Gifford Lectures* all agree, then Keats, would assuredly have accepted the gospel of the higher values. Certainly it can be said that, as things stand now, the poetry of Keats in no way discourages a belief in personal immortality.

The nineteenth century presents an imposing list of English poets who were interested in the subject of immortality. A few were doubtful or antago-

nistic in their attitude, but the vast majority preached the gospel of faith and of optimism. On the negative side, we must reckon with such names as those of Matthew Arnold and Fitzgerald, the latter by his remarkable translation of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam providing the greatest glorification of materialistic agnosticism in all literature. Still more significantly, James Thomson in his *City of Dreadful Night* and Thomas Hardy in his shorter poetical productions have re-echoed to the full the atheistical pessimism of Schopenhauer. Swinburne occasionally voices a negative gospel in his poems. For example, in his melodious and beautiful *Hymn to Proserpine*:

I know

I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as they sleep; even so.  
For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze for a span;  
A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man.  
So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not again, neither weep,  
For there is no God found stronger than death; and death is a  
sleep.

It should be remembered, however, that this passage is spoken in character, being represented as the words of one of the priests of the old pagan religion which was disappearing before the rapid inroads of Christianity. George Eliot in *The Choir Invisible* has illustrated the finest type of Positivistic philosophy with its teaching concerning the immortality of influence. Reference has been made elsewhere to this poem and it need not

further concern us here. On the whole, the negative side of the problem of immortality has had far fewer advocates during the nineteenth century than the positive.

When we turn to consider the champions of the larger hope during this period, we are confronted by a brilliant array of names. One need only catalogue a few of them. In the list we find Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Coventry Patmore, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Jean Ingelow, William Morris, George Macdonald, William Watson, Francis Thompson, Sir Edwin Arnold, Adelaide Procter, and the two supreme representatives of the century, Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning. All of these writers have taught the doctrine of immortality in one form or another. Our space limitations will permit us to deal only with three representatives of the group. The three whom we have chosen to stand for the others and for the group as a whole are Rossetti, Tennyson, and Browning.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti along with Coventry Patmore and Francis Thompson illustrates what may be styled the mystical interpretation of the future life. It is the spirit of Dante and of the best that is in the Catholic faith of the Middle Ages. Patmore's *Lyrics*, Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*, and Rossetti's *The Blessed Damosel* are all incarnations of this spirit. As an illustration of this type of thinking we cite Ros-

setti's sonnet from *The House of Life* entitled "Lost Days":

The lost days of my life until today,  
What were they, could I see them on the street  
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat  
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?  
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?  
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?  
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat  
The throats of men in Hell, who thirst alway?

I do not see them here; but after death  
God knows I know the faces I shall see,  
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.  
"I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?"  
"And I—and I—thyself," (lo! each one saith),  
"And thou thyself to all eternity!"

If Rossetti represents the mystical and medieval attitude toward immortality, in the person of Alfred Tennyson we find a complete incarnation of what may be styled orthodox critical Protestantism. He was born and bred in the atmosphere of the church and never wandered away from it during his long lifetime. While this was true, he never lived in the cloister-like seclusion of the Catholic mystics, but on the contrary kept his mind singularly open to every new current of thought. He lived during a time of stress both in the scientific and theological realm. He was a contemporary of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Comte, and Haeckel, and was familiar with their writings. It was inevitable that a mind such as his should re-

flect the cross currents of intellectual opinion in his poems. There is scarcely one of his larger productions which does not touch upon the subject of immortality, but it is in his *In Memoriam* that we find the most complete exposition of the poet's views. *In Memoriam* deals with all the current scientific doubts which were raised in large measure by the publication of *The Origin of Species* and endeavors to find a solution for them. The poem has a direct personal reference, and yet it is peculiarly typical of the thought of English Protestantism as a whole. Tennyson does not shrink from the issue, but faces it through. Doubtless he has some sorrows when the battle is over, but few reasonable people will deny that he comes out a victor. Until immortality passes over from the realm of faith to the realm of exact science, stanzas like these will continue to be a part of the mental furniture of every thoughtful advocate of the future life:

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

\* \* \* \* \*

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is.

From *In Memoriam* to *Crossing the Bar*, Tennyson held to his faith. He struggled hard at times



with doubt and there are occasional notes of pessimism in the two *Locksley Halls*, in *Maud* and above all in *The Idylls of the King*, but he never surrendered. The epitome of his long and battle-scarred experience is found in the last word of his old age:

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

As Tennyson represents the views of modern orthodox Protestantism, so Robert Browning stands out as the incarnation of Christianity in its more liberal and broader philosophical aspects. Browning was never precisely a churchman, and yet he was a thoroughgoing believer in Christianity. He was preeminently a philosopher and an artist and he could see the good sides of the two extremes embodied in Roman Catholic mysticism and modern ultra-Protestant rationalism. His doctrine of immortality is much more robust than is that of Tennyson and is a more powerful adjunct to faith. Where Tennyson hopes for immortality, Browning believes in it and refuses to entertain any doubts upon the subject. There is no theme which occupies his attention so often or which is so emphatically dealt with in his poems as the doctrine of personal immortality. Like Tennyson, there were times during his later middle life when he concerned himself with agnosticism and

the current skepticism of his day, but there is nothing to show that these studies caused any serious change in his attitude toward the future life. There is scarcely a possible phase of immortality which Browning has not discussed somewhere in his writings. We have space for only a few typical citations. For example, the problem of where in this present life we are to start in the new existence is dealt with in *Cristina*:

Such am I: the secret's mine now!  
She has lost me, I have gained her;  
Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,  
I shall pass my life's remainder.  
Life will just hold out the proving  
Both our powers, alone and blended:  
And then, come the next life quickly!  
This world's use will have been ended.

In other words, life in the world to come will take its starting point from the highest rather than from the latest point of our earthly existence.

What the experience we call death is like from the standpoint of those who have passed through it occupied Browning's attention a good deal. He pictures it in dramatic fashion in *Prospice*:

For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
The black minute's at end,  
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,  
Shall dwindle, shall blend,  
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,  
Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
And with God be the rest!

The problem of marriage in the future life which so disturbed the reflections of the Sadducees Browning answers in his own peculiar fashion in the concluding words of the section entitled "Pompilia" in *The Ring and the Book*:

Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,  
Mere imitation of the inimitable:  
In heaven we have the real and true and sure.  
'Tis there they neither marry nor are given  
In marriage but are as the angels: right,  
Oh how right that is, how like Jesus Christ  
To say that! Marriage-making for the earth,  
With gold so much—birth, power, repute so much,  
Or beauty, youth so much, in lack of these!  
Be as the angels rather, who, apart,  
Know themselves into one, are found at length  
Married, but marry never, no, nor give  
In marriage; they are man and wife at once  
When the true time is: here we have to wait  
Not so long neither! Could we by a wish  
Have what we will and get the future now,  
Would we wish aught done undone in the past?  
So, let him wait God's instant men call years;  
Meantime hold hard by truth and his great soul,  
Do out the duty!

The question as to what is to become of the bad people after death is also dealt with in *The Ring and the Book*. Browning did not accept the orthodox teaching concerning hell, but looked with favor upon Origen's doctrine of the final purification and restitution of the wicked. In the section entitled "The Pope" in *The Ring and the Book* he has this to say concerning the fate of Guido, the villain of

the poem, and the worst man Browning can conceive:

For the main criminal I have no hope  
 Except in such a suddenness of fate.  
 I stood at Naples once, a night so dark  
 I could have scarce conjectured there was earth  
 Anywhere, sky or sea or world at all:  
 But the night's black was burst through by a blaze—  
 Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore,  
 Through her whole length of mountains visible:  
 There lay the city thick and plain with spires,  
 And, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea.  
 So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,  
 And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.  
 Else I avert my face, nor follow him  
 Into that sad obscure sequestered state  
 Where God unmakes but to remake the soul  
 He else made first in vain; which must not be.

Will there be memory and recognition after death? Browning says so unhesitatingly. Perhaps the most picturesque fashion in which he has answered the question is to be found in one of his most popular poems, "Evelyn Hope":

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!  
 My heart seemed full as it could hold;  
 There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,  
 And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.  
 So hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:  
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!  
 There, that is our secret: go to sleep!  
 You will wake, and remember, and understand.

The most complete expression of Browning's philosophy in its application both to the present world and the world to come is to be found in

“Rabbi Ben Ezra.” This poem teaches the doctrine that the present life is intended solely as an introduction to the larger and fuller life to come, that all values created here will be preserved after death, and that even the smallest good will never be lost. This poem may be styled a poetical exposition of Höffding’s philosophy of religion, although Browning appears to have had no direct connection whatever with the Danish philosopher. The underlying idea of both writers is that of the absolute preservation of values. Let us note how Browning teaches this doctrine in his poem:

And I shall thereupon  
Take rest, ere I be gone  
Once more on my adventure brave and new:  
Fearless and unperplexed,  
When I wage battle next,  
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

\* \* \* \* \*

He fixed thee 'mid this dance  
Of plastic circumstance,  
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest:  
Machinery just meant  
To give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fool! All that is, at all,  
Lasts ever, past recall;  
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure.

Browning retained his faith in personal immortality throughout his life. It is interesting to compare his epilogue written only a few days before



his death with Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," which was produced under similar circumstances. Both poems are magnificent contributions to what may be styled the literature of immortality, but there can scarcely be any question that Browning's confession is the more positive and robust of the two. Tennyson hopes to meet his Pilot, but Browning calls the opponents of immortality fools and never doubts that when he shall fall asleep, it will be to wake. To quote his own language:

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time  
Greet the unseen with a cheer!  
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,  
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever  
There as here!"

This chapter is already too lengthy to permit any discussion of the subject from the standpoint of American literature. It would be an easy and altogether delightful task to show how the American poets have emphasized the future life in their writings. From "Thanatopsis" to "General William Booth Enters Heaven" the subject has received attention. Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Alice Cary, Poe, Lanier, and a host of others have expressed sentiments similar to those of Tennyson

and Browning. There is scarcely a dissenting note unless it be in the work of Walt Whitman, and there are passages in Whitman which seem to support the doctrine. The unanimity of opinion upon the subject is even more noticeable in American literature than it is on the other side of the Atlantic.

As we stated at the beginning of this chapter, the poets are seers. In the nature of the case, they deal more with faith than with scientific fact. Their confidence in the permanent existence of the human spirit should encourage the rest of us to share in their faith. To believe that throughout the ages they have been so universally mistaken, that they have been false prophets concerning the future, and that therefore their messages have been untrustworthy and vain assuredly requires a degree of pessimism which is neither necessary nor natural. Over against the testimony of the agnostics and skeptics of the ages we place the experience of the forward looking seers and prophets of the world.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE SAINTS

IT was at one time asserted that the belief in immortality is a universal heritage of mankind. Obviously such an assertion is not in harmony with the facts. Multitudes of people especially in the far East do not possess such a belief, and apparently do not desire continued personal existence beyond the grave. Some of the great religious leaders of the world have not believed in personal immortality. The founder of Buddhism is generally regarded as belonging to this class. Confucius also had very little to say about the future life. There is a good deal of divergence concerning the meaning of Nirvana. It is true that in a recent article in the *Hibbert Journal* of January, 1925, by Mr. Edmund Holmes, the position is taken that the idea of Nirvana does not at all involve the thought of personal annihilation. On the contrary, Mr. Holmes asserts that it meant a clarification and expansion of the individual spirit closely akin to the Christian conception. If this interpretation is correct, and Mr. Holmes is not alone in accepting it, then the religions of the East cannot be regarded as antagonistic to the doctrine of personal survival.

Whatever view may be taken concerning the meaning of Nirvana, it is obvious that practically all of the religious leaders of the world who came from the nations west of India believed in the immortality of the soul. Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, and the religious leaders of Egypt, Rome, and other western countries are all included in this class. The one exception appears to be in the case of the Hebrews, and this exception is dubious. To assert that Moses and the prophets who followed him did not believe in personal immortality is scarcely justified in view of the statements of Jesus and the New Testament attitude in general. It appears to be true that the Jewish people as a whole did not accept the doctrine of immortality in the earlier periods of their history, but the prevailing religious party of the nation came to accept this view later, and there is nothing to prove that the forward looking leaders of the nation did not believe in a future life long before such a belief became a part of the spiritual possessions of the rank and file. In any event, Christianity, which sprang out of Judaism, has championed the doctrine of immortality with an enthusiasm equalled by the advocates of no other religion save that of Mahomet. Many of the advocates of modern Judaism are firm believers in immortality, although it is only fair to say that others do not accept the doctrine. The chief difficulty in the way of a belief in the future life on the part of the



ancient Hebrews appears to have been their intense glorification of Yahweh which did not permit human beings to aspire to immortality along with Him. There is a certain sense in which there are affinities at this point between the Hebrew and the Hindu faiths, although we ordinarily think of them as incarnating the opposite poles of extreme religious transcendence and immanence. Moreover, as we have already observed, the Hebrews even far back in their history did have a sort of shadowy belief in another world which they denominated Sheol, the place of the departed spirits. Perhaps the average Hebrew of the early centuries thought of Sheol much as Homer and his contemporaries thought of Hades. If this be true, we can understand why the Hebrew writers placed such little emphasis upon the future life. Existence in Sheol, as Homer pictured existence in Hades, was to be dreaded rather than to be desired, and it was preferable to refer to it as little as possible. There may have been a feeling of this kind back of the aversion of Confucius to any discussion of the future life. While an attitude of this kind does not represent a satisfactory view of immortality from the Christian standpoint, it can hardly be said to be a denial of the doctrine. It is scarcely fair, therefore, to cite religious teachers who accepted this view, and for this reason said little about immortality as being opposed to the doctrine.

Making all allowances for exceptional skeptics

and unbelievers, it is certainly no exaggeration to say that the overwhelming majority of the world's religious teachers and saints have been firm believers in a future life. Not only is this true, but it has been characteristic of their faith in immortality that it has in most cases passed over into the realm of assurance and has become almost as strong as their consciousness of the ordinary facts of experience. This vital faith in the hereafter on the part of so many people is a phenomenon with which modern science can no longer refuse to deal. The new science of the psychology of religion recognizes this situation fully, and deals with it in accordance with scientific methods. Of course, no one would assert that because a large number of people, or for that matter all people believed in a certain doctrine, that this fact would prove the doctrine to be true. It is quite conceivable that everybody may hold or may have held to erroneous views. The chief difference in the present instance consists in the fact that the mystical experience of immortality which the saints claim to have possessed is not at all of the same type as a mere intellectual hypothesis or opinion. The saints believed in immortality not because of logical arguments in its favor, but because of an inward conviction of its reality. Here we touch upon the whole subject of mysticism which our modern psychologists, including especially James, Starbuck, Pratt, and Thouless have treated so extensively. Whatever

interpretation of mystical experience we may accept, the facts involved can scarcely be dismissed as inconsequential. It is with some of these facts that the present chapter has to deal. It is conceded that they do not furnish scientific proof of the reality of the future life, but it can scarcely be denied that they do supply evidence which should help to strengthen one's belief in immortality.

Doubtless the most obvious illustration of a conscious realization of immortality in the present life is to be found in the experience of Jesus Himself. Nothing seems clearer than the fact that He regarded the present life as a mere interlude in the larger life of the spirit. His constant effort was to induce His followers to accept the eternal viewpoints as a guide to their daily actions instead of looking at things from the ordinary temporal point of view. Even more than Spinoza, who interpreted the idea in a different way, he insisted upon seeing everything under the form of eternity. Men were to strive to lay up treasures in heaven rather than upon earth because the heavenly life is of more significance than the earthly. Jesus himself never worried much about material things, and literally embodied Harnack's definition of religion as eternal life in the midst of time. He was in the world, and yet not of the world because He knew that His life was not to be cut short by death. In the Johanne writings, this idea of conscious immortality on the part of Jesus is brought out in the greatest

detail, but it is not absent from the Synoptics. Jesus possessed such a complete consciousness of His own immortality that a realization of this fact is essential to any proper understanding of His teaching and work.

Paul, next to his Master, possessed perhaps the most thoroughgoing consciousness of immortality. Paul's conviction of the reality of the future life was based in part, it is true, upon logic and philosophy, but in the last analysis he fell back upon his mystical experience as the final proof of the doctrine. He is so sure of the future life that, like Browning's grammarian again, he is willing to stake everything upon it. He counts everything but loss provided he can be sure of eternal life. This is the supreme treasure, and he has no doubt about its reality. At the very last, he stands firm, and there is no tinge of regret in his farewell message to the world. There is a crown of righteousness laid up for him, and he is quite sure that he will receive it.

John and the other apostles bear testimony similar to that of Paul concerning their assurance of personal immortality. With John, as we have noted elsewhere, it is the certainty of union with the divine life which is primarily back of this assurance. The Johannine writings throughout the ages have been regarded quite properly as the most valuable sources of mystical inspiration and conviction. There is a quiet assurance of the real-



ity of eternal life which pervades these documents and which carries conviction to those who are not too skeptically minded to recognize its presence. Mr. W. K. Fleming in dealing with this question in his volume on *Mysticism in Christianity* says of the fourth gospel that it has been styled "the charter of mysticism." The symbolism with which it abounds is fundamentally mystical, and the *logos* doctrine which it stresses is of the same type. In the Johannine writings, immortality is assumed so completely and unhesitatingly that no logical arguments are advanced in its favor. Paul occasionally debates the question, as for example in First Corinthians, chapter 15, but John does not argue about it. He is concerned about proving the identity of Jesus with the Divine Logos, and is quite sure that if he can do this, everything else follows as a matter of course.

The early Christians accepted the doctrine of immortality in much the same fashion as John and Paul. Better than any historical documents, those rude inscriptions in the Catacombs tell the story of triumphant faith. Many of those whose names are recorded in these underground tombs were martyrs during the stormy years of persecution and sealed their faith with their blood. The absolute assurance of immortality which they possessed and which enabled them to go to the stake and to the cross with triumphant joy remains as an evidence of the reality of Christian experience



in these early centuries. There would have been few martyrs if these early Christians had felt any doubt concerning the reality of the future life. They triumphed over death and torture because they were sure that the sufferings of this present life are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed hereafter. Of course they may have been mistaken; every cause, true or false, has had its martyrs, but the unanimity of their experience should possess corroborative value along with other evidence in favor of the Christian doctrine of immortality.

Among these early martyrs, one of the most notable was Ignatius who according to tradition was thrown to the lions at Rome about 115 A.D. In the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans he begs his fellow Christians not to prevent his martyrdom, as by so doing they will deprive him of the glorious reward which awaits him in eternity. He says:

But I fear your love, lest it do me an injury. For it is easy for you to do what you please; but it will be hard for me to attain unto God, if you spare me.

But I would not that ye should please men, but God, whom also ye do please. For neither shall I ever hereafter have such an opportunity of going unto God; nor will you, if ye shall now be silent, ever be entitled to a better work. For if you shall be silent in my behalf, I shall be made partaker of God.

But if you shall love my body, I shall have my course again to run. Wherefore ye cannot do me a greater kindness, than to suffer me to be sacrificed unto God, now that the altar is already prepared:

That when ye shall be gathered together in love, ye may give thanks to the Father through Christ Jesus.

St. Augustine is usually regarded as the greatest figure in Catholic theology. From the standpoint of present day thought most of the dogmas which he advocated appear singularly unreal and impossible. Nevertheless, Augustine will always be an appealing figure because of the strangely personal mysticism which he has enshrined in his *Confessions*. The theology of this famous volume is its least significant feature. It is its mysticism which remains fresh and vital after the lapse of centuries. Augustine felt personally conscious both of the presence of God and of the certainty of eternal life. The heart of his experience is disclosed in the famous quotation from the *Confessions*: "We have come from Thee, O God, and our souls shall find no rest until we return to Thee again."

One of the most notable passages in the book deals with his farewell conversation with his mother:

As now the day drew nigh, when she should depart out of this life \* \* \* \* together we held converse very sweet and "forgetting those things which were behind and reaching forth unto those things which were before" we were discussing between us in the presence of the truth, which Thou art, of what kind would be that eternal life of the Saints, which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man" \* \* \* \* And further still we climbed, in inner speech and thought, and in the wonder of Thy works, and we reached to our own minds and passed beyond them, so as to touch the realm of plenty, where Thou feedest Israel for ever in the pasture of the truth, and where life is that Wisdom, by which all things are made, both those which have been, and those which shall be; and Itself is not made, but is now as it was, and ever shall be; or rather it is eternal.

Along with the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis still holds its place as one of the great devotional classics of the ages. The author, whose identity is more or less uncertain, was evidently a man of profound religious experience who felt personally conscious of the reality of the future life. We have space for only a few brief quotations from his pages:

Direct thither day by day your sighs, your prayers, your tears, that your spirit after death may be worthy to pass with joy into the presence of your Lord.

You shall not say then, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" neither shall you cry, "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged" for death shall be swallowed up in victory, and health shall be unfailing and there shall be no more anxiety, but blessed joy, and sweet and lovely companionship.

In all things look to the end, and remember that you will have to stand before a strict Judge, from Whom nothing is hidden, Who is not to be bribed by gifts, and Who will admit no excuses, but will judge according to that which is right.

It would be easy to multiply quotations like these from the pages of all the great mystics. As Augustine and à Kempis wrote and taught, so taught Bernard, and Francis and Eckhart and Tauler and Suso and Ruysbroek and Rolle and Catherine of Sienna and St. John of the Cross and Traherne and Crashaw and Bunyan and Behmen and Fox and Wesley and Coventry Patmore and all the other names which are associated with what William James calls the twice-born type of religious experience. All these men and countless others who

have enjoyed similar experiences testify to the reality of their convictions concerning a future life. No one of them believed for a moment that this earthly experience is all that pertains to the life of a Christian. Like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, they all felt sure that they had no abiding city here, but they sought one to come. Again we say, the saints of the ages, like the seers, by the joyous and confident testimony which they have borne to the reality of the eternal hope should help to inspire faith within us. One thing is certain, and that is that if we accept the doctrine of immortality, we shall always be in good company.

The writer believes that at some time, perhaps in the not too distant future, the fact of personal immortality will be scientifically demonstrated. When that time comes, it will no longer be possible to cast aspersions upon the daring souls who through the power of faith laid hold of the treasures of eternity. The great value of religion consists in the fact that it enables us to appropriate realities which science cannot reach. These realities are of supreme importance for the daily ordering of our lives. The conviction of life beyond the grave belongs to this group. Some day it will be recognized as a fact which no one can dispute. For the present, it is simply a datum of faith. Through the power of the will to believe, we may reject it if we so desire, but we take this step in opposition to a mass of evidence which should give us pause.

After all, what do we gain by willing to disbelieve in immortality? The heritage of the beast of the field and the chosen refuge of those who have failed in life's battle and who are afraid to face the future. Is it not better like Robert Browning to "greet the unseen with a cheer" in full and joyous expectation of that higher and nobler existence which is our true birthright and heritage?

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## CHAPTER XVII

### THE GOSPEL OF THE RESURRECTION

WE have discussed earlier in this book the historical aspects of the Christian idea of immortality. We have tried to indicate something concerning the nature of the doctrine as it is to be found in the gospel record and in the early Pauline and Johannine writings. In the historical sketch which we have attempted to draw, no special reference has been made to the significance of the resurrection teaching as a vital feature of Christian doctrine. It would be altogether unfair to bring a book like this to its close without stating the facts concerning the Christian gospel of the resurrection and the part which that gospel has played in the world-wide expansion of Christianity.

The early Christian message was made up of two fundamental characteristics. Beyond any question it taught a new ethic, the way of love. The Sermon on the Mount and the Kingdom teaching of Jesus in general bear abundant testimony to the significance of this side of the new teaching. Nevertheless, it appears clear that if the gospel proclaimed by the early apostles had contained nothing more than the ethical message of Jesus it would never have conquered the world. Important as that mes-

sage is and was, it does not contain, nor did it ever contain, the dynamic which is necessary to explain the rapid expansion of Christianity during the second and third centuries, A.D. Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, has elaborated the causes which, in his judgment, were responsible for the triumph of the new religion over the time-honored cults of the ancient world. Without attempting to analyze the carefully developed explanation which he has given, it may suffice to say that the primary cause is easy to deduce from the pages of the New Testament itself. The gospel conquered the world because it delivered men from the fear of death and from the power of the grave. This explanation may be drawn from all of the Pauline writings, and it requires only the most casual reflection for one to see that it is the only adequate solution of the problem.

The ancient world, when Christianity was born, was weary and careworn and sated with sensual pleasure and metaphysical speculation. Men had tried every new avenue of material enjoyment and had discovered that in the end all of them led to ennui or despair. They had sought by philosophy, and it must be conceded that their speculations were of the most brilliant and fascinating character, to find out God and to penetrate the mystery of death with the result that all their efforts had achieved only a mocking failure. Everywhere

there was the shadow of the grave. Epicurus and his followers tried to make little of the fear of death, but it is doubtful whether even the philosopher himself succeeded in extracting comfort from his own arguments. The Stoics tried to steel themselves against death by rising superior to it, but the best they could do was to practice the glorification of suicide as a token of victory. While the teaching of men like Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius possesses marvelous sublimity and certain features which may be justly styled heroic, it is in substance a gospel of despair, and it produces an atmosphere of despondency and gloom wherever it is accepted. The pictures of life during the early Roman Empire which have come down to us fully justify these conclusions. The cultured classes were either Stoics or Epicureans in their thinking, and to whichever group they belonged, life was equally tedious and unbearable. In their pessimism and despair the Roman nobles plunged into the worst sort of excesses and thereby hastened the doom of their civilization.

Among the common people the situation was even worse. Most of them were slaves, and the lot of a slave in ancient times was wretched beyond the power of imagination. Torture and death were constantly before him, his life was a season of unending toil, and he had no hope of anything better after the present life had come to an end. The

situation in Rome was more serious at this time than it had been in the early years of the Republic. Then, at least, men believed in the gods and in some sort of existence hereafter. Now the old mythologies of the past had become obsolete, and there was nothing but philosophy to take their place. Philosophy the man on the street could not understand, and when he saw that it brought no comfort to his master who could understand it he had no desire to probe its secrets. On all sides there were only weariness, despair, and death. It was no wonder that suicide became so prevalent throughout the empire. Life was difficult to bear under such appalling circumstances. In spite of the fact that the ancient world was swept by pestilence and war to such an extent that the average span of existence was much below what it is today, multitudes could not endure life to its natural and normal end. One needs only to read the dismal pages of Suetonius or Tacitus to realize how dark was the horizon which confronted practically every citizen of the empire during the age of its most splendid civilization.

Into this atmosphere of doubt and despair, of suicide and of death, came the clear note of the resurrection gospel. It was something altogether new, something which had power to drive away despair and to put in its place life and hope. The significant thing about the resurrection preaching

was its appeal to plain facts. Greeks and Romans alike were surfeited with argument and had come to realize its utter futility as a means of consolation. Plato and Socrates and Aristotle had produced the best of reasons why the soul should be immortal, but their reasons were all theoretical and nobody could show that the facts corresponded to their speculations. To prove that the soul ought to be immortal and that it actually is immortal are two different things. Plato did the one and Jesus Christ the other. In the last analysis it was the Christian demonstration which counted. The proofs of the resurrection were not philosophical or speculative but scientific and practical. The gospel preachers were either witnesses of the fact or so intimately acquainted with the actual witnesses that their testimony amounted to the same thing. It was this note of assurance, this certainty of conviction, which carried the gospel into the very heart of the ancient world. Men did not want to die—they wanted to live, and here alone eternal life was offered to them. Was it any wonder that they grasped it, held to it, and rejoiced in the privilege of going to the arena or to the cross rather than to give it up? It was the gospel of the resurrection and not the gospel of the Kingdom, using the latter term in its ordinary social and ethical significance, which broke down the battlements of heathenism in the Graeco-Roman world.



The men who preached this gospel believed in it. Of this fact there can be no doubt. The fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians represents one of the earliest documents of the New Testament, and no one can read the vivid and eloquent passages which it contains without realizing that the man who wrote these words was terribly in earnest. Paul undoubtedly believed in the social gospel, as the thirteenth chapter of this same epistle abundantly proves. It was not the social gospel, however, which made him willing to give his body to be burned. He says in the most direct fashion that if the dead rise not, he and his followers are of all men most pitiable. Nothing could be more striking than his emphasis upon the cardinal place which the resurrection teaching occupies in his gospel. The gospel itself is nothing more than the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, with, of course, the consequent corollary that these facts guarantee our own resurrection from the grave. If the gospel of the resurrection be not true, then Paul characterizes his own preaching as folly, and the position of his converts as hopeless. The resurrection is not an incident but is rather the corner stone of the entire gospel. Assuredly conclusions such as these represent the Pauline temper not only in this but in practically all of the other epistles which are ascribed to him in the New Testament. In Philippians, written some years after,

and presumably near the close of his life, he considers death as gain not because it will bring surcease of sorrow or pain, but because it will mean the beginning of a new and more glorious existence. It would be quite futile to quote similar passages from the other epistles inasmuch as this attitude may be said to be one of the few undisputed characteristics in the life of the great Apostle.

Paul was of course familiar with the stock objections to his position. These objections were apparently much the same two thousand years ago as they are today. They relate chiefly to the manner and character of the resurrection. "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they rise?" represents the skeptical criticism of Hume no less than the incredulity of all modern materialism. It is when one attempts to image the life beyond that the difficulties begin. Obviously we are here attempting the impossible, and should not be disappointed when we fail to secure satisfactory results. The life beyond is not like life here, at least in the sense that our earthly categories fail to interpret it, and inasmuch as the higher categories are not as yet in our possession we are helpless in our efforts to image the future. Paul understood this, and yet it did not disturb his faith. The objection, in fact, seemed to him so unwarranted that he uses rather strong language in meeting it. "Thou fool," he replies to the objectors, and then

proceeds to justify his using the epithet. In substance his argument is that life in this world is dependent upon death, and even here there are multitudinous varieties of bodies, all of them appropriate to the uses of life. If the lower life of the plant and the animal finds appropriate bodily expression, how improbable, nay, how absurd it is to think of the higher life of the spirit as incapable of securing an appropriate body. Paul nowhere teaches the doctrine of discarnate spirits. The soul has its body in this world, and it will have a body in the world to come. This body will be of a different and higher kind, but it will be a body. The word itself is of course unsatisfactory inasmuch as it seems to carry with it a distinctly material or physical connotation. And yet there appears to be nothing more satisfactory at our command. Paul attempts to get rid of the difficulty by using the phrase, "a spiritual body," and contrasts it with the natural body known to our present senses. The term "spiritual body" is, however, in itself contradictory so the difficulty is not entirely removed by using it.

Modern psychologists and philosophers like Count Keyserling and Professor Broad are quite Pauline in their emphasis upon the reality of the thinking spirit. The former, with Bergson, would have us believe that it is the spirit which creates the body rather than the opposite, and that the

process which really goes on in the present world simply repeats itself on a higher scale and in more wonderful fashion in the world to come. If the spirit can create its own body here, surely it can do no less hereafter. It is not the body which grows the spirit but it is the spirit which grows the body. After all, there is little difference between this view and the eschatology of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Professor Broad too thinks that the mind survives the physical structure after the latter passes away, but does not believe that it can create another body. It remains for an indefinite time without a home, occasionally returning to earth in the form of mediumistic possession, and eventually appears to dissolve into nothingness. If it could be furnished with a body appropriate to its needs, apparently it might go on living in the future world just as it previously lived in this one. Professor Broad refuses to accept the Christian hypothesis that such a body is provided for those who fall asleep in the hope of the resurrection. The difference between him and the orthodox Christian at this point is simply a matter of faith. He refuses to believe that a body will be provided for the spirit when the latter passes into eternity. He does not dispute the fact that the spirit exists as a real entity, and the further fact that it actually passes into the unseen world. These things he regards as scientifically



demonstrated. It is doubtful whether any Christian ought to ask more from science than Dr. Broad has granted. Obviously the only way in which we can reach conclusions, at present at least, concerning the resurrection of the body is upon the basis of faith in God and especially of faith in Jesus Christ. The most we can ask of science at present is that it shall not make this faith impossible or exceptionally difficult. Certainly it is doing neither today. If we do not believe in the resurrection gospel it is only because for some reason or other we are incapable of putting forth the moral energy which is essential for a true act of faith. Science has made the fact of the resurrection more intelligible and more probable from its own viewpoint than has been true at any time since the miracle of the empty tomb. There is more justification for faith in immortality today than at any other period in the history of the world. Why then is there perhaps less actual faith in the power and reality of the life beyond than at any previous time in human history?

The answer to the question is after all not difficult to give. Our modern civilization has become so engrossed with purely material interests that it has ceased to care for spiritual preservation. We have discovered so much and have invented so many things and have so multiplied our human interests that we cannot think of any other type of



life as possessing reality of value aside from the one which we have ourselves created. We have become intoxicated with our own material grandeur, and we have sacrificed the higher life of the spirit upon the altar of our crude and crass physical reality. As a result of this misdirected interest, the life of our civilization, as Keyserling puts it, is dying out and civilization itself will disappear unless we change our point of view. It is not the creation of material things which has undone us but it is the fact that we have allowed ourselves to be mastered and dominated by our own creations. We have fashioned a beautiful image of stone or marble or steel and have then bowed down and worshiped it. We must get back our soul or else even the body of our civilization will perish. Once we do this we shall again find it easy to possess the simple and unhesitating consciousness of eternal life which characterized the early Christian communities. We need to ponder in serious fashion the question of our Master, "What shall it profit a man," or we may add, a nation or a civilization, "if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" This exchange our modern age is in serious danger of making. We have recreated the world from a material point of view, but in the process we have almost if not quite lost our soul. Life begins and ends for us in this material world. It has no larger vista. It is circumscribed wholly

by temporal and spacial conditions. We no longer even dream of heaven or paradise. By our own confession we have allowed ourselves to commit spiritual suicide.

In the midst of all the confusion and turmoil of our modern materialistic civilization we find the same uneasiness and unrest which characterized the days of the Caesars. Once more the shadow of death begins to weary us and our machine-made pleasures to pall upon us. In spite of multiplied material comforts we are not satisfied but are forever demanding more. No matter how large our incomes may be they are always a little less than the amount we would like to spend. As our material wants multiply our spiritual horizon tends to shrink. Hence our interest in things spiritual continues to decline. In such an atmosphere virtue becomes palsied while vice and crime grow strong and flourish. When religious people no longer concern themselves about the world to come the inhabitants of the underworld will not think about it. Eternal life means added responsibility for present behavior, and no one knows this better than the so-called man of the street. What is wrong with our present civilization is simply that it lacks life. It has mechanism in plenty, but it no longer possesses vitality. The spirit has gone out of it.

It is time for the church to recapture the gospel

of the resurrection. The ministry must realize its significance as the very corner stone of the Christian religion. Church leaders must believe it, preach it, live it, and manifest it in an age which needs it more than any other since the days of the Caesars. If it be said that this is hard to do we must remember that our Master himself asked the question, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth." Lord Bacon was much impressed by this question, and made it the text for one of his best known essays. It is, after all, a lack of faith which is at the heart of our trouble. The difficulties in the way of immortality appear staggering to us because we have such little faith. We can discern no hope of salvation for our age unless it can somehow increase its faith. A recent writer tells us that mankind has reacted farther during the last two decades in the direction of barbarism than at any period since the beginning of the Renaissance. Probably this is true. It will require a reaction in favor of spiritual things before the pendulum can swing in the other direction. Let us hope that we are soon to witness the turn of the tide.

But now *is* Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

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